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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide for kindergarten through grade four divides language arts into eight subject areas. Each subject area is covered in a separate section; however, the focus of the guide is on providing an integrated curriculum. The following are included in most or all of the sections: introduction, goals/objectives, evaluation, and bibliography. The subject areas (with additional topics in parentheses) are: (1) oral language (language development, functions of language, classroom environment, integration, discussion, informal talk, creative expression, activities, and listening); (2) literature (teacher strategies, sample lessons, storytelling, and book selection); (3) drama (teaching implications); (4) reading (readiness, self-concept, reading comprehension, vocabulary development, word perception skills, oral reading, questioning, organizing for instruction, integration, adapting program to student needs, and suggested resource books); (5) visual communication (teaching strategies); (6) writing (children's writing development, composition, strategies, and sample stories); (7) spelling (spelling development, spelling process, instructional approaches, planning a program without a text, error analysis, and activities); and (8) handwriting (readiness, teaching handwriting, and quality of handwriting). The final chapter provides strategies and activities for integrating the language arts curriculum. (DC)

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PREFACE

This guide is intended to assist teachers in meeting the needs of children enrolled in early years classrooms. Although the materials presented are based on the most current research and on tested classroom practices, teachers are expected to adapt the suggestions to their own teaching styles and to the needs of their particular students. The needs of most young children should be accommodated within these guidelines. However, there will be children with special needs, such as those whose first language is not English, who could benefit from a more specialized program. For this type of program, teachers are referred to the English as a Second Language Handbook, available on request from the Department of Education.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Oral Language section of this guide is heavily indebted to the work of Elizabeth Thorn and Carl Braun as presented in:

Teaching the Language Arts: Speaking, Listening, Reading, Writing. Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Ltd., 1974.

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ORAL LANGUAGE*

INTRODUCTION

Language growth does not take place in the absence of experiential growth; conversely, experiential growth is severely limited if not supported by language growth. It is for this reason that the language arts program must make its own unique contribution to experiential growth and serve, as well, as a major integrating force across the curriculum. Children gain power over oral language only to the degree that they are required to use language for a variety of purposes within a broad spectrum of experiences.

Since the actual physical and social environment of any child is of necessity limited, the school must strive to heighten the child's awareness and understanding of his or her surroundings, while providing new experiences not readily available in the local environment. The science program provides situations for the child to experience and talk about the physical world. The social studies program aims to broaden the child's experience with human beings as social creatures. Similarly, mathematics, art, music, and physical education programs each provide a unique set of experiences as well as new ways of observing and talking about those experiences common to all. The language arts program, on the other hand, provides the means through literature of exploring vicariously the entire range of human thoughts, feelings, and experiences. This exploration is not limited to any particular time or place, nor is it limited to the real world. Literature expresses this experience in the best of language--it provides us with the unique opportunity of extending and deepening children's experiences while surrounding them with models of language well used at one and the same time. What more delightful way is there of practicing language skills than by listening to literature well read, talking about literature, reading literature, dramatizing literature, and striving to write literature? These and similar activities are central to the language arts program. Children must have continuous opportunities to use language in meaningful situations and daily exposure to the sound of language well used if they are to gain power over language.

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Principles of Language Development

Children have a natural capacity to learn language.

- All children should be able to continue their natural development of language.
- The classroom environment should be structured to encourage the spontaneous use of language.

Children come to school with an understanding of and the ability to use language.

- Understanding the developmental levels of children's language requires careful listening, recording and assessing of spontaneous language.
- Understanding how children use language is necessary for planning suitable programs for them.
- Language programs should reflect the language needs of individual children.

Children have acquired the structure of their language without formal teaching.

- The structure and developmental level of children's language varies with individual experiences.
- An understanding of language acquisition should encourage teachers to include more informal opportunities for using language.

Language reflects values and culture.

- Language should be seen as a means to maintain a positive attitude towards one's culture.
- Teachers should recognize and respect the language children bring to school.
- Children should be encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings.
- Teachers should develop the skills of recognizing and dealing with their own values and those of others.

Multilingual children may understand the concepts of language more readily than monolingual children.

- Acquisition of more than one language increases the understanding of what language is.
- The ability to speak more than one language should be regarded as an asset.

Children model language selectively.

- Teachers can be significant models, but there should also be a variety of peer and adult models from which to choose.
- When children have a variety of models from which to choose, they will become more adept at choosing appropriately.

General Goals

- To provide a comfortable environment to facilitate language development.
- To provide children with experiences that develop language.
- To develop an understanding of the relationships between the oral and written components of language.
- To use language to express and understand ideas, thoughts and feelings of oneself and others.
- To provide opportunities for appreciation and enjoyment of language.
- To develop children's ability to communicate effectively.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Concept Development

> Infants and children who consistently get the opportunity to hear sounds consistently respond to the sounds they hear and thus their hearing and listening skills develop normally. Adults who are responsible for the sounds in a child's environment must remain alert to the fact that children respond to novelty in sounds as opposed to the sameness in their sound worlds. For those who have listened to infants' babbling before they go to sleep, they have heard the ways in which the infants change the sounds, phrasing, intonation and rhythm of the babblings. Infants seem to know how to make their sound world interesting and alive when they are in control of their own productions. (Cazden, 1972).

Concepts for the names of things are developed as the child becomes familiar with the things to which the words refer. This places a premium on personal experiences with the thing to be known.

If a child learns to call a cat, "cat," he will for a while call all small hairy animals "cat." He will do so until he learns the labels for dogs, sheep and the like. Children who are taught to say "meow" when they see a cat, label that cat "meow." A dog named "Bow-wow" becomes a "Bow-wow"; sheep may be labelled "Baa-baa." Such names in the early stages of concept development may help young children to use the sounds animals make as a clue to their differences. Thus, "Baa-baa" is associated with the other label "sheep." "Bow-wow" is the same as "dog," and "Meow" is the same as "cat." Later, "Bow-wow" becomes known as the sounds a dog makes, and "Baa-baa" the sound that a sheep makes. The more a child learns about any one thing that she has a label for, the better able she will be to identify certain definitive features from all animals. Children are constantly engaging in the process of classifying.

Syntactic Development

Children begin with babbling and progress to one- and two-word sentences. They select the words that they hear spoken in their environments. They develop personal meanings for the words they use, and as well, they extract rules of grammar based on what they hear.

Children's language is rule governed; that is, children structure their sentences. They use subject, verb and object. Through mistakes, they learn to use the past tense and plurals correctly. Not all children come to school with the mastery of these skills, but most of them do.

However, children must continue to have the opportunity to practice their language amd learn more about how it works. One way in which children can come to understand their world is through the classification of the things, people, and ideas with which they come in contact.

Phonological Development

The most fundamental information about the phonological development of children's sound system is that it is a structured sound system. And just as children develop correct sentence structure and meanings for the words they use without actually being taught, so also do they develop a structured sound system.

What does phonological knowledge imply? It implies a system that includes knowledge of the individual sounds of letters as well as knowledge of how individual sounds blended together create words. By adding additional sound to words, you can create new words. For example, a child who knows how to pluralize knows when to add -s (coats), -z (dogs), or -iz (dishes) to the end of a word. Children who are learning the past tense can add -t (jumped), -d (played), or -ed (planted) to the end of a word.

Phonological development also includes the use of stress and pitch. For example, a young child's response to the second time a teacher asked him his name, was "I TOOLD you MORR Gan!" Stress and pitch are found in babbling as well as in the first one-word sentences.

As children listen, and as others listen to and talk with them, they develop both a structured sound system and the ability to formulate questions. Both phonological development and questioning are processes that are learned as children listen to models who encourage their curiosity. The children select from models' word usage, and as in all of their language development, they use questions which match their cognitive structures, making errors and learning from them during the process.

Development of Question Forms

Questions are first expressed through intonation alone; for instance, the word "door," through intonation found in the sound of the word, may denote three different meanings--a declaration, a question, or an emphatic expression.

The ability to formulate questions clearly follows a developmental pattern. Young children in nursery or kindergarten may ask, "What your name is?" when asked to "ask that boy what his name is." But later the same child will be able to ask, "What is your name?" A table concerning the development of question forms can be found in Cazden (1972, p. 54).

What are the implications for classroom teachers? Listening to children's use of the "wh" questions and listening to their interpretations of the "wh" questions of others will help teachers to determine the order of children's development. Teachers can then expand children's questioning skills and enable them to move smoothly from one level of questioning to the next. The following example may help to clarify particular children's understanding of "What."

> A child brought a paper to the teacher and asked "Where this color?" The teacher pointed and said "Right here." "No," said the child, "Where the color?" A child standing nearby said "Red." Teacher said, "Oh, what is the color? Red is right." The first child smiled, nodded her head, and walked away.

The teachers will then be able to model and assist children in the development of questions at the appropriate times--in situations where children are themselves formulating questions or where the teacher must ask a question to continue a conversation or to get information.

FUNCTIONS OF LANGUAGE

Both Tough (1977) and Halliday (1973) talk about using language for the purpose of communicating with others in a meaningful way. Teachers must be aware that children come to school knowing a great deal about language. All of them have had experiences which are significant to them. But experiences may vary widely in content. Halliday said that the major task of the school is to maintain and expand the full range of language functions. Teachers need to provide an environment that encourages children to wonder, to investigate, make friends, express ideas, converse with peers and adults, solve problems, report events, and ask questions about things and ideas.

According to Halliday (1973), children know intuitively what language is because they know what it does. He describes language development as a process whereby children gradually "learn how to mean." Their attempts to construct meaning are characterized by making their language express meaning. Before children enter school they have made many demands on their language and have met with considerable success in using it for their own purposes.

Thus, children bring to school their knowledge of the ways language can be used and considerable experience in using it. Halliday stresses the importance of looking at children's language from their point of view. Otherwise, school-oriented tasks will not coincide with children's conception of the nature and uses of language. Halliday identifies models of language which are normally present in five-year-old children (1973). These models are 1) instrumental, 2) regulatory or interactional, 3) personal, 4) heuristic, 5) imaginative and 6) representational.

HALLIDAY'S CATEGORIES	CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SAMPLES
Instrumental	I want my supper now.
Regulatory	You follow me. I'll find the right race.
Interactional	We could build that model together but you'll have to read the directions.
Personal	I can't come because I'm not feeling well.
Heuristic	Lets' see if that piece fits in here. It seems to have the right shape.
Imaginative	Let's be astronauts on a special space flight.
Representational	I'll tell you what happened on my holidays.

Joan Tough's model for classifying children's use of language is similar to Halliday's but more definitive. She speaks of strategies: 1) self-maintaining, 2) directing, 3) reporting, 4) toward logical reasoning, 5) predicting, and 6) projecting into the experience of others.

TOUGH'S CATEGORIES	CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE SAMPLES
Self-maintaining	Don't come here. This is my private fort.
Directing	You get the ladder so we can climb up and put the fire out.
Reporting	We went to the fire station yesterday, and the fireman let me slide down the pole.
Toward Logical Reasoning	We shouldn't take the clock apart because we don't know how to put it back together.
Predicting	The clouds are so dark and heavy looking, I think it's going to rain.
Projecting	I would be frightened if I were that boy deep in the cave.
Imagining	We could pretend to go camping and put up the tent in the backyard.

As one looks at the specifics in both, similarities are noted; e.g., "tell my why" (heuristic) and justifying actions, "let's pretend" and developing imaginary situations based on real life, and projecting into the experience of others. There are other similarities. The differences lie in Joan Tough's more detailed descriptions of children's purposes in talking.

EVALUATION OF CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE

Using the Halliday or Tough model, teachers can find out what abilities children have in using language. By focussing on children's use of language as they engage in various activities, teachers can discover what children have learned and make decisions about how to foster language development in the future.

Using one of the preceding forms, a teacher may collect samples of children's language and determine how language is being used. In addition to being used in the collection of random samples, the forms can be employed as well in the analysis of different situations in which children use language. In the chart that follows, Tough's categories are put to such a use, with the teacher's role in facilitating the development of the various language functions being noted in the third column. Halliday's categories can be similarly used.

A SAMPLE FORM USING TOUGH'S CATEGORIES

SITUATION	TOUGH'S CATEGORY	TEACHER'S QUESTIONS	CHILDREN'S RESPONSES
Children are constructing a cardboard animal.	Self-maintaining, Directing	Will you need scissors and glue? What are you doing now? What's going here?	We will need some glue and scissors. I'm putting some eyes on the face, and you put the ears on here.
A child is asked to look at a picture of an accident.	Reporting on present and past experiences	What is happening in the picture? What will happen next? What is a good title for the picture?	A little boy fell off his bike. His friend will come out to pick him up.
Children are observing cans filled with ice. They are asked to explain the formation of moisture on the outside of the can.	Toward logical reasoning	Tell me what's happened? What would happen if there was water instead of ice? Why is there water on the outside of one can?	The can is all wet on the outside, and there is no hole in it. We could change it and see. Maybe because all the ice is cold.
Children are going to read a story. They have seen only the title and the cover.	Predicting, Projecting, Imagining	What do you think will happen first? What do you think the problem is going to be? How will it be solved?	The picture and title remind me of another story. The boys are lost in the forest. They will be found because they will light a fire for someone to see.

The way in which a child uses language allows teachers to infer what meaning is for that child. By encouraging children to use language in informal and formal situations, the teacher can assess the language being used in the classroom and can plan activities which will encourage further development.

Some points to consider when evaluating children's language:

1. Evaluation should provide reliable information that can be used to make appropriate decisions about children's continuing language development.

2. Evaluation should take into account individual differences among children. It should be based on the abilities of the child and should be determined through performances in language arts tasks. Absolute and/or adult standards of language use are not appropriate for children in elementary school. Standards should be set relative to each child's language growth. Evaluation used to compare children with each other, as it has been in class grading, should receive much less emphasis than that devoted to measuring the improvement or development which an individual child makes in relation to his or her previous performance.

3. Evaluation should be a continuous process. Attempts to determine present status and identify future directions depend on ongoing monitoring of progress and collection of data relating to children's growth and response to the program.

4. Evaluation should be a cooperative process. There should be opportunities for children, parents and teachers to talk about strengths and weaknesses, to decide what steps can be taken to eliminate difficulties, and to provide for continuing development.

5. Evaluation should be comprehensive. It should attempt to measure growth in all areas of language development and to examine those factors which have a bearing on children's performance.

6. Evaluation should utilize a variety of techniques in obtaining information; e.g., observation, informal and formal tests, parent and pupil conferences, and checklists.

7. Evaluation should guide the teacher in planning and adapting the instructional program.

Specific Evaluation Techniques

Despite the problems in drawing conclusions about children's linguistic competences from a study of their productions, one of the most enlightening exercises that can be undertaken is the observation and analysis of a child's free speech. Some suggestions for undertaking this form of assessment are presented below.

1. Day-to-day observation of children's spontaneous language; recording

language used in spontaneous situations

   a. Tape recordings of children's language at different times throughout the year, to assess their needs

   b. Collection of language samples of the children (50 sentences) as records

2. Checklists to show the ways in which the child is capable of using language (See charts on Tough's and Halliday's classifications of language use on the preceding pages.)

3. Use of a developmental sentence score which assesses level of language development by giving weight to indefinite pronouns, personal pronouns, primary verbs, secondary verbs, negatives, conjunctions. [The use of modifiers is directly related to children's readings (Lee & Canter, 1971) and should be noted.]

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Teachers should become increasingly aware of the language environment in their classroom and of their contribution to it. The oral language environment includes listening, reading, and writing as well as the teacher's and children's talking. (Nova Scotia Dept. of Education, 1978)

In order to encourage children to use the full range of language functions, the teacher must establish a classroom atmosphere and environment that stimulates this language development. However, it is not sufficient to set up a warm, informal classroom. Pinnell (Alberta Dept. of Education, 1978) showed that despite an accepting school atmosphere, a limited amount of personal language was used by early years children as they talked with each other; almost no personal language was addressed to teachers; and there was no evidence of personal statements being made by teachers.

Teachers must provide for experiences that invite interaction from children. There should be many opportunities for genuine conversation, formal presentations, two-person dialogue, small and large group exchanges and private speculation.

In setting up a classroom that fosters language development, teachers need to keep in mind that children can be trusted to learn. It should be remembered that children have learned how to talk without special lessons in talking. In short, they have managed to learn a new language during the pre-school years, a task that would be quite demanding for most adults.

An informal classroom is not a chaotic one. Because children are allowed freedom of movement, the opportunity to investigate their own interests, and the opportunity to express their feelings does not mean that there is no structure or organization in the classroom.

If, after assessing their classrooms' language environment, teachers find it unsatisfactory, they are advised to gradually change the physical set-up of their rooms.

1. Set up one centre and have it operating smoothly before setting up another one.
2. Move a few desks/tables together after jointly setting up rules of behavior with the children.
3. Move some more desks/tables together when the children and you are comfortable with the situation.
4. Have a short period of time daily in which children are free to pursue their own interests, within reason.

Movement in the Classroom

Tables and desks can be placed together so as to encourage children to form discussion groups as they work. Children should also be encouraged to help each other--to exchange information on intentions, needs, feelings, tasks, problems, findings, etc., in discussion and other activities.

Children should not be confined to a specific seating arrangement. Often the children form new groupings around the same table from one day to the next. They should feel free to move about the classroom and choose the place where they wish to work. Some may prefer to work with lap boards rather than at desks or tables; others may prefer to work sitting on the floor.

After a large group session (sharing), children may spontaneously form smaller, more manageable discussion groups. They may be involved in different activities within the same time period.

Freedom of movement and talking will, of course, result in an increased level of sound in the classroom. Both teacher and children have to assess the sound level to determine whether or not it is excessive. (See Nash, 1979)

Use of Space Within the Classroom

The teacher organizes the space and the materials so that children can make appropriate choices. She watches the children's use of the space and alters it with their help as needed. In many ways, the process of involving children in the organization of the classroom is as important as the physical organization itself.

Space can be planned to increase the child's natural distractability or to reduce it. It can give the teacher time to teach, or confine him to a daily routine of housekeeping chores. Properly planned space promotes suitable conditions for learning. The design of the classroom space can make communication possible and allow each child to develop his or her ability to finish tasks and achieve satisfaction in doing so.

Use of Things

The content of the program revolves around learning materials ("things"), and how children can learn from them. To some extent, people (parent-volunteers, teacher aids, the teacher) are also involved since they help the children learn from and use the things profitably. The early years are characterized by learning through experience. With appropriate learning conditions, the content of the programs can be systematically developed during this five-year period.

Use of People

The basis for all learning is communication between people. This is particularly true of the early years, for many children are nonreaders. Peer group inter-communication is a particularly important part of learning.

Use of Time

In adult terms, the child's understanding about time is limited. This has implications for many decisions about program design. If we ignore the information available about time concepts and about the ways in which the child learns to use or misuse time, we may unwittingly produce the opposite learning from that intended. The learning-environment approach to early years education begins with a commitment to the idea that what the teacher does is determined by the understanding of the child's view of time. (Nash, 1979)

A child needs time to practice, time to reflect and pursue his/her own insights, to examine his/her knowledge in order to use it more efficiently and precisely. Time should not be broken up into artificially short segments of subject matter.

Discipline

Children are expected to discipline themselves and to exercise judgement and responsibility. They should have some part in making the class rules but not in deciding whether or not the rules should be enforced. They may choose to disobey the rules, but must then accept the consequences of their choice. If a child is not able to provide appropriate alternative behavior, the teacher will do it for him or her. It is reasonable to relax rules as students become responsible, but children should not be given responsibilities that they are not ready or willing to assume. Teachers should gradually increase the opportunities for children to become independent and responsible.

INTEGRATION

The use of oral language is not restricted to a slot in the timetable labelled "language arts." The teacher organizes the classroom to inspire serious talk about the program in every subject area. As a science teacher, he or she takes time to develop the language of comparison in an experiment to describe the relative rate of growth and appearance of bean plants kept under different conditions. In a social studies lesson, the teacher encourages thinking about the assignment of authority in the community and, at the same time, promotes skilful participation in a discussion.

Through a mathematics activity, such as learning the characteristics of geometric shapes and their identification in the environment, the teacher encourages the use of precise, descriptive vocabulary. The discussion of paintings after an art period gives students an opportunity to add a verbal explanation of the visual expression. In addition to talk that grows out of what might be termed the "formal" curriculum, there should be much talk that grows out of the informal aspects of classroom life. Interest-catching objects (pictures, novelties, plants, an aquarium, a class pet, a new book), an event of community interest, a television show or film can be the starting point for sharing ideas. Here, too, it is the teacher's role to encourage pupil exchange and to provide an adult model of language to serve as a goal for the children.

CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

The ability to participate effectively in a discussion is a major oral language skill, and teachers use "discussion" as a highly effective teaching strategy. Discussion plays a prominent role in the language program throughout the elementary years. The material which follows is included to acquaint the teacher with discussion techniques.

Discussion in the classroom can be considered in two ways: first, as a teaching strategy, which draws upon teachers' own expertise and, second, as a learning technique which involves the pupils' ability to understand and use good discussion practices. Children should not only participate but should be able to use discussion as a method of communication and learning independently, in and out of school.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Discussion techniques are appropriate at some times, less so at others. Teachers should be aware of their advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

1. The combined thinking of a group may prove to be both deeper and broader than that of an individual because each person brings a different point of view, a different range of experience, and a different pattern of thinking.

2. Thinking is developed and stimulated in a group situation by clarifying concepts and ideas, and reacting to the contributions of others, as group members question and consider ideas carefully.

3. Understanding of peer attitudes, thought patterns, and reactions is developed by the group members.

4. Group members can gain from the opportunity of sharing the unique knowledge or talents of individual members.

Disadvantages:

1. Group discussion is slow. Although a more adequate solution may result, it may take too long.

2. Group pressure may prevent individual views and opinions from being debated.

3. Discussions may go off topic and become unproductive.

4. Discussion requires informed participants. Therefore, it is not always viable when seeking information.

Use of Discussion

Discussion can be used effectively in three major areas: 1) development of concepts, 2) development of attitudes, and 3) development of skills. The three are described in greater detail below.

1. Concept Development

   In discussion, development of ideas and the extension of knowledge results from sharing by group members and will depend on the background brought to the situation.

2. Development of Attitudes

   Through discussion, two sets of attitudes can be developed: attitudes basic to group functioning (such as respect for the ideas of others) and attitudes toward the discussion topic. Children will learn to refine their thinking when given the opportunity to talk their ideas out with the group.

3. Skill Development

   Discussion should develop vocabulary and thinking. Choosing the exact word to express ideas will extend vocabulary. Thinking skills, such as the ability to analyze problems, to see relationships among ideas, to infer, make judgements and draw conclusions, can also be developed through discussion.

Choosing a Discussion Topic

A successful discussion depends on a wise choice of topic. Several basic factors should be considered:

1. The topic should not be too broad. There should be a specific problem, question, or idea to explore.

2. The problem should require a composite solution rather than one specific answer which might be found by an individual researcher.

3. The topic should be of sufficient concern and interest to maintain pupil interest.

There are many situations and topics in every subject area that meet the requirements of a discussion; for example: a problem on the playground in which one child is left out of a game, or ways to spend free time productively in the classroom. A topic may come up during a reading lesson where a number of solutions are possible. Topics that build on children's interests and allow for differing opinions usually result in productive discussions.

Requirements for a Good Discussion

A good discussion requires more than a good topic and clearly designed goals. The participants must have well-developed social attitudes and language skills.

Pupils' Role

Pupils must develop:

- skills in speaking and listening
- respect for ideas and opinions of others
- cooperative group behavior
- ability to compromise

1. Children need to learn that in a discussion one person speaks at a time, but they must learn to do this without raising their hands.

2. Pupils must learn to respond directly to comments from their peers without channelling their ideas through their teacher or group leader.

3. Children (like adults) often find it difficult to keep a discussion "on topic." The leader must insist that the participants be selective, choosing from their total experience with a topic only those aspects that are relevant.

4. Pupils need to learn to listen to each other and to develop an idea that has been introduced. To ensure development of an idea, the teacher (discussion leader) should frequently ask for a comment on, or an extension of, a previous speaker's ideas.

The Teacher's Role

In any single discussion lesson, the teacher undertakes the following tasks:

1. The teacher contributes to the discussion. As a contributor in a discussion group, the teacher should change roles from that of an authority, who is "supposed to know," to that of a group member who has an idea to offer. The teacher can no longer dominate the group.

The teacher's purposes in contributing might be:

- to correct misinformation or misinterpretations that are being accepted by the group;
- to offer interesting or key information that the pupils don't have or are ignoring;
- to open a new line of thought through comments or questions;
- to encourage deeper development of an idea through questions or comments;
- to support a minority position that may not be getting a fair hearing because of group pressure.

2. The teacher involves the timid speaker and controls the overly talkative child. By interjecting a question or comment, the teacher can often involve a new participant and direct the discussion away from a pupil who tends to monopolize it.

3. The teacher helps to keep the discussion moving at a good pace.

4. The teacher guides an evaluation of the discussion in terms of preparation, participation, leadership, and attainment of goals.

When to Introduce Discussion Skills

Ideally, the development of discussion skill begins during the child's first year in school. The teacher works with small groups of children--preferably consisting of only four or five pupils--and encourages thoughtful consideration of familiar topics. At this point the teacher's questions are the key to promoting the development of ideas rather than a mere recounting of experiences.

Gradually the teacher moves to include in the program discussions that require preparation. The teacher should also plan discussions directed by pupil leaders. Not all pupils are ready for such responsibility, but those that are should be given experience in leadership and advance planning.

Children should grow in competence in discussion as they progress from kindergarten through the school program. However, it is quite possible that a teacher in a higher grade level will encounter a class without previous school experience in discussion. In such a situation, the teacher must begin at the beginning.

At all grade levels, children need guidance in setting up group rules for participation and in defining purposes that establish clear limits for discussions. Development by the pupils of a checklist of standards for discussion and careful post-discussion evaluations are also useful.

SAMPLE CHECKLIST

1. Did everyone in the group have the opportunity to speak?
2. Did we speak without interrupting someone else?
3. Did we listen to other speakers and add to what they said?
4. Did we listen carefully so that we didn't repeat ideas?
5. Did we ask questions when we didn't understand something?
6. Did we talk to each other, not just to the teacher?
7. Did we have a good discussion?

Sample Discussion Lesson - Grade Two Level

The following example is a formal reading lesson for a grade two class that uses discussion as a teaching strategy. The teacher has prepared for this lesson by having the children take part in many prior discussions and by choosing the story carefully so that the group could make use of their past experience with similar story patterns. The lesson begins with the teacher posing a question to motivate the group and start the children thinking about the selection, The Mightly Hunter, (Hader & Hader, 1943) that they are going to read:

"What are you wondering as you read the title and look at the pictures on the first page?"

S. 1 Is that little Indian boy the mighty hunter?
S. 2 He could be. He has a bow and arrows. He looks like the Indian hunters I've seen on T.V.
S. 3 Not really, they are usually bigger, and they ride horses and chase buffalo.
S. 4 You don't have to hunt with a bow and arrow. I went hunting with my dad, and he used a rifle.
T. Can hunters use different weapons for hunting?
S. 2 Yes, even traps like in a movie I saw.
S. 5 Will the Indian boy hunt the squirrel that's in the picture?
S. 3 You can't exactly tell by looking at the picture.
S. 6 I don't think that little Indian boy could be the mighty hunter, so I wonder if there will be some other bigger hunters in the story?
S. 1 Or maybe they just call it the mighty hunter for a joke?
S. 4 Authors wouldn't make a title for a joke. There would be some reason.
S. 7 Well, I see that squirrel and a rabbit in the picture so I wonder if this story is make-believe and something like the "Three Billy Goats Gruff?"
T. Can you explain what you mean?
S. 7 Well, in the Three Billy Goats the first little goat begs the troll to let him pass over the bridge and to wait for his bigger brother. Then when the biggest goat comes, he pushes the troll into the water, and all the goats are safe eating grass.
T. And how could this story be the same?

S. 8 The squirrel could say to the hunter, "Don't kill me I'm too small, but I know where you can find a big rabbit."
S. 2 That could be right, and the hunter could keep finding bigger and bigger animals.
T. Then what? How will it end?
S. 3 Maybe a wolf or a bear might kill the hunter.
S. 6 Then it would be like the Three Billy Goats because the troll gets killed.
T. Who is like the troll in your story?
S. 7 The hunter is like the troll. He's the bad guy.
T. Well, you certainly made up an interesting story. How can we find out if that's what really happens?
S. 5 Lets read the story.

The group reads the story silently--either individually or with a partner.

T What did you find out?
S. 4 We were right. It was like the "Three Billy Goats Gruff." The animals did get the hunter to keep looking for a bigger animal.
S. 1 Well, it wasn't quite like the Billy Goats because there were more than three animals, and they were different, a squirrel, a rabbit, a fox, a deer, a wolf, and a huge bear.
S. 9 But the animals did win. The bear scared the hunter away so all the animals were safe.
S. 5 Yes, but it wasn't really the same because the hunter didn't get killed like the troll. He went back to his village.
T. Anything else? (pause)
T. Do you think that was a good title for the story?
S. 3 No, because he didn't hunt anything at all; he was just a little boy.
S. 6 But you could say he was a mighty hunter because he learned a lesson.
S. 1 What do you mean?
S. 6 He learned that animals only kill when they are hungry. He was trying to kill just for fun.
S. 1 So.
S. 4 You could say he was mighty or brave because he learned he was wrong, and he admitted it. He went back to the village school to learn more about hunting.
S. 5 Yes, he was really a mighty person but not a mighty hunter.
S. 8 It's a good title because it made us wonder what would happen. We thought the Indian boy would really hunt and not learn a lesson about hunting.

In this lesson, the children have used language to recall past experience, predict a sequence of events, make comparisons and recognize related aspects of two stories, extract the central meaning, reflect on events, and draw conclusions.

The children were actively involved in the discussion, and the teacher spoke only when necessary, to start the discussion, to ask for explanations, or to focus on the topic. The discussion prior to reading helped the group bring out all the information members knew about hunters.

This information provides a background or script for reading the story. Thus, the children were able to predict the general framework of the story as well as specific words with more accuracy. Because the group was actively involved in discussing, asking questions, and making predictions about the story, they were motivated to read it to find out if they had guessed what the author had in mind.

The teacher plays an important role in this discussion. She/he must be responsible for keeping the talk flowing among the group members and encouraging children to interact with each other rather than with the teacher. This becomes an opportunity for the children to use language in a wide variety of ways to develop both thinking skills and concepts. (See Tough's and Halliday's uses of language.)

The discussion has other important learning possiblities, too. The children listen attentively to each other. They ask for explanations when they don't understand and lend support when the speaker makes a statement with which they agree. The group collectively brings all the information they have on the topic to the reading situation. The story provides new information, while the post-reading discussion provides an opportunity for the group to assimilate the new information into what they already know. In this instance they have extended their understanding of the word "mighty." For further evaluation, see the rules listed under "Pupils' Role" in "Requirements for a Good Discussion."

INFORMAL TALK

Informal talk or conversations are more difficult to plan since the topic can not be selected in advance. However, they should occur frequently in the classroom. Here are some guidelines to follow:

1. Establish a relaxed classroom atmosphere.

2. Establish good rapport with the students.

3. Prepare a list of objectives for the children to keep in mind which could include the following:

   a. talk "with" rather than "at" each other;
   b. listen and respond to what has been said;
   c. disagree courteously;
   d. see that each member of the group has a chance to speak;
   e. break in courteously.

Sample Conversation Lesson in a Primary, Multi-Age Classroom

In the following example, four children have an informal talk about a book they had read previously. Although the teacher is not present during the conversation, she has carefully prepared them for the activity. First, she helped the children choose a book which interested them. Second, she has given them guidance in informal talk situations before, so they are now able to carry on this activity independently.

This discussion is an example of an activity children engage in while the teacher works with other groups.

The Five Chinese Brothers by Bishop (1938)

Colin: That story sure was violent.

Andrea: What does violent mean, Colin?

Colin: Well, it's sort of...really...like when they were going to chop off the guy's head--one of the Chinese brother's head--that's kind of violent.

Andrea: I see.

Catherine: I didn't like the part where they threw him into the water. That wasn't nice.

Andrea: Well, Catherine, he's the guy who could stretch as long as he wanted.

Colin: Ya, that was okay.

Andrea: Ya.

Colin: Cause he could stretch his legs.

Andrea: And then they let him go.

Colin: And when they were going to cut off his head, then that other guy had an iron neck, and that was good and...

Catherine/ Andrea: It's not that he could...

Andrea: Well it doesn't matter...he can get out of it.

Catherine: I know.

Colin: What happened when they put him with the whipping cream?

Andrea: When he came out the next day, he said, "Oh, that was a pleasant sleep."

(Colin laughs)

Andrea: Must have been a good breakfast the next day.

Colin: (laugh) Ya-a-a.

Andrea: When you get hungry, you just eat all the whipped cream. (laugh)

Catherine: Ya, that's a good one.

Cheri: Ha, lucky too.

Andrea: Ya - I should say. (laugh)

The children listen to one another and respond to what each other says. They ask for explanations when there is a misunderstanding and take part in the conversation without monopolizing it.

By taping conversations, teachers can evaluate children's language usage by referring to Tough's or Halliday's categories. This strategy is applicable at any grade level and can be used for discussing a book, theme, or concepts in science, social studies, and math.

CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Storytelling

Storytelling, either as a creative or interpretative activity, contributes to oral language growth and provides a base for story writing. Given an opportunity to retell stories they have read or listened to, children will interpret the original in their own terms and present the characters as they see them. (The six-year-old who, in her retelling, said "And then the grandmother said, 'I better go and phone the woodsman to come and get rid of this wolf'" effectively updated "Little Red Riding Hood.") But the children's stories, nevertheless, reflect the original models, whose structures help them to establish patterns of organization for storytelling, whose words or phrases are often incorporated in the children's vocabulary, and whose sentence patterns may be imitated in their speech.

Extensions of Storytelling:

1. First Stories - Telling about personal experiences, retelling jokes, retelling anything they have heard
2. Retelling Stories - Retelling favorite stories which have been read over and over or stories that have been told many times. (The best stories to use are either based on folk tales or have a small number of characters and a fast-moving plot.)
3. Original Stories - Creating original stories as a result of involving familiar characters of a story read in a new situation, using a familiar story as a model for a completely new story, or of creating characters and plot entirely from the imagination.
4. Using Pictures for Stimulus - Using pictures, as story starts, particularly if they imply rather than tell a story

Topics for storytelling can range as far as the children's interests and can be closely related to many of the content subjects. Through their oral stories, the children learn to develop a tale with a beginning, a middle, and an end; to sequence ideas for greatest clarity; to build up excitement or suspense; to convey emotion; to choose words precisely. In other words, they learn to compose effectively without the additional task of recording that can be extremely taxing for children whose composition activities are confined to writing.

Group Speaking

These speaking activities can enhance language development, reading, and writing, and can be used to fill up spare minutes throughout the day in a meaningful, creative way.

Chants and Songs:

Chants and songs are useful with large groups of children to 1) help children internalize the rhythm and flow of language; 2) have fun with language in a non-threatening, supportive way; 3) contribute to language fluency, children's sensitivity to words, and to vocabulary development.

Example 1: Chant

Crickity, crackity
Jack Beanstalkity
I'm standing on the corner
Swinging my baseball batity.

I think I'll make a cake
I think I'll make a lake
I think I'll fall asleep awhile
Counting herds of sheepity.

Children will enjoy saying this in unison as they clap a quick beat, or as a round, or by using it as a model for making up and writing their own chants.

Example 2: Song

I'M A LITTLE PUMPKIN

I'm a little pumpkin
Short and stout,
Packed full of seeds,
That you just scrape out.
When you are all finished,
Then I'll be
The cutest jack-o-lantern,
That you did ever see.

Author Unknown

(Sung to the tune of I'm a Little Teapot)

Children will enjoy singing this song and creating their own using other topics.

Example 3: Ballad

THE BALLAD OF THE HAUNTED HOUSE

The wind blew hard and the storm clouds grew,
The sky turned grey instead of blue.
I was all alone in this big haunted house.
No one was with me, not even a mouse.

My friends had dared me to stay here all night,
And I had this feeling I was in for a fright,
There was this sound in the attic that bothered me so;
What it was, I really don't know.

I cautiously opened the door very wide,
And now I could see just what was inside,
A table stood in the half-lit room,
Six chairs were seen in the cobwebby gloom.

Six dancing couples were out on the floor,
They floated about. They all seemed to soar
About in the air. They were ghosts, without doubt!
I could see right through them as they danced about.

And each couple danced to a haunting refrain
Played by a headless figure, I maintain,
Seated at an organ that puffed and wheezed
While white bony fingers flew over the keys.

The sight I saw, I could stand it no more;
So quickly I turned and fled out the door.
I couldn't believe the adventure I had.
I was out of that house and I truly was glad.

I'll never go back there. Never again!
But visions of ghosts in my mind will remain.

Jackie Robson, age 11

[From A Century of City, ed. Victor Froese, Winnipeg: Printing Services, University of Manitoba, 1974. Used with permission. The selection is also reprinted in Expressways, Level 4 (Thorn and Irwin, 1977).]

Children will enjoy:

1. reciting this in unison;
2. assigning verses to several groups to be recited with appropriate sound effects included;
3. acting out the story;
4. using this ballad as a model for original writing.

Example 4: Sample Stories

Children would enjoy tales such as "The Old Woman That Swallowed the Fly" for:

1. choral speaking;
2. reading along;
3. dramatizing;
4. chanting a refrain.

Other titles include:

Millions of Cats by Wanda Gag (1978)
A Fox Went Out On A Chilly Night by Peter Spier (Illus. 1966)
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
by Judith Viorst (1976)

Dramatic Play

Dramatic activities provide children with one of the most natural ways to use dialogue and take part in conversations.

Creative dramatics implies improvised speech rather than scripted plays; it provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to experiment with language and learn to use it to manipulate their environment. It encourages children to interact through language, since the play depends on the cooperative development of an idea. It develops imaginative thinking and frequently provides a vehicle for a child to sort out personal ideas on a subject.

An audience is not necessarily a part of the total situation in a dramatic play. The teacher is interested in the personal development of the individual participants; the children are interested in creating and resolving a situation. A polished performance is not the goal.

In the primary grades, dramatic play is a spontaneous outgrowth of children's activities and should be encouraged by the teacher. Two children playing at the sandtable become truck drivers discussing a stalled truck; one child becomes both storekeeper and shopper and develops a conversation at the "store"; four children decide to "play the three bears" after the teacher has read the story.

> Thinking, daydreaming, imagining, playing, doing and acting are all components of the art of being somewhere, something, or someone else. Young children are past masters of the art.

Listed below are some suggestions on how to get started:

1. A collection of adult hats, purses, high-heeled shoes, ties and other items of clothing should be kept on hand.

2. The teacher and pupils can devise situations to be interpreted by the children through creative dramatics. Situations such as the following can be used:

- an improvised incident
- a recent community or school event
- a commercial for a product
- a scene from a favorite story
- topics from other subject areas
- any other situations which develop out of the interests and activities of the class

The conversation should be improvised, but this does not mean that it is unprepared. Children will need to:

1. talk about the situation;
2. decide who the characters will be;
3. decide what the action will be;
4. develop mood after they have several similar experiences.

Dramatic play could lead to writing scripts for plays. For further information, see the Drama Section.

Puppets

Children may use puppets for either creative storytelling or imaginative thinking. A puppet play requires the participants to listen and respond in a situation very like that of normal conversation. Usually the speaker cannot plan in advance but must build on what he or she has just heard. For beginners, a dialogue seems to work better than a situation involving too many speakers.

Developing a Chart Story

Step 1: Experience

The starting point for introducing written language is, necessarily, experience, either immediate or recalled, that is shared by a small group. The children are guided in a discussion of the experience so that they have a chance to exchange information and opinions and develop ideas about it.

Step 2: Ideas

The children organize their ideas orally and select the ones they want to record in written form.

Step 3: Writing

In the final step, the teacher writes to their dictation, and the children recognize that the written words symbolize their oral words. Then, as their composition is read to them, they recognize the relationships among writing, reading, and ideas.

Thus, from the very beginning of their writing and reading experiences, children accept the fact that writing expresses ideas; and because the ideas are familiar and expressed in language they understand, their first experiences with written language are meaningful. Children understand, too, that writing is concerned with those same ideas that the reader has a responsibility to interpret when represented. Because the children are so personally involved in the preparation of their first reading material, and so aware of its meaning, they are unlikely to develop the idea that reading simply involves saying words.

The chart story also illustrates the children's varying ability to use language. For example, a first grade class has studied wild animals during science class and has just returned from a trip to the zoo. In this lesson the teacher is focusing on the children's ability to interpret experiences as she guides and records a chart story.

Chart Story 1

Children at the labelling stage gave the following verbal report. "At the zoo we saw lions. We saw three polar bears and a big turtle. There were lots of beautiful birds in big cages."

The children made no attempt to refer to details, recognize a central idea or sequence events. The teacher could encourage these children to give more information about each animal. She/he might ask what a zoo is for, to bring out the central idea. To develop sequence, the teacher could have the children try to remember what they saw first, second, last, etc.

Some other children are able to include details, express their own feelings, and recall specific events.

Chart Story 2

"We had lots of fun at the zoo. First we saw a big lion sleeping on the branch of a tree. Then we saw a family of ducks swimming in the pond. The monkeys were fun to watch. They were having a game of tag. One baby monkey got a ride by hanging on to his mother's neck."

These children could be encouraged to think of a central theme and to make some comparisons. Other children may include the central theme, detail, sequence, and their previous knowledge about animals.

Chart Story 3

"We found that the zoo is a good place for wild animals to live. They have homes that are just right for them. The monkey's home was in a tree so that he could swing on the branches. The baby kangaroo has a safe home in his mother's pouch. Most of the animals we saw were mammals, but we saw some amphibians and birds too. The most interesting mammal was a mother camel feeding her baby. The birds were beautiful, especially the flamingo. It stood in the water on one long skinny leg."

For more examples and information refer to Talking and Learning by Joan Tough (1977).

Sharing Experiences Orally

Show and Tell: This activity has tremendous potential for developing language, but in many classrooms, it has been allowed to degenerate into what has been facetiously referred to as "bring-and-brag." At its best, "show-and-tell" is a lively period during which children share interesting and important ideas or experiences. It is slightly more formal than conversation in that one pupil is supposedly an "authority" on the topic, but it should share many elements of good conversation...

The advantages of a good "sharing period" are self-evident: high interest in using oral language to communicate; vocabulary development; organization of ideas for clarity of expression; learning to interact in a group language situation; thinking through an idea for presentation; enriching experience through listening to the experiences of others.

Gradually "show-and-tell" gives way to simple "telling" as children recognize that they can share experiences as well as objects. This form of the activity provides an excellent bridge to reporting and, as horizons gradually expand, becomes a current events period.

Book Selling: A child talks about a book he has read and enjoyed in order to encourage others to read it.

Giving Instructions: After constructing something at the art, building or science centre, the child is asked to explain, step by step, how he completed a task so that other children can replicate it.

ACTIVITIES FOR VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

Most of the activities described can be adapted to suit whatever level of language ability the pupils have reached. Activities more suitable for use in the junior than in the primary grades have been indicated.

1. Collect items of varied textures--a piece of velvet, a mirror, a piece of sandpaper, fingerpaint, etc.--and have the pupils feel them, then list as many words and phrases as they can think of that describe the "feel."

2. Have the students listen for one minute and then try to describe the sounds they hear, or have them listen to a special sound and then try to describe it.

3. Have pupils list five things they heard on the way to school and then look for words to represent accurately the sounds of each.

4. Listen to radio or TV commercials with the students. Have them identify the "impact" words and discuss the reasons for the speaker's choice. Have the children suggest alternative word choices and compare the effectiveness of these words with the original.

5. Develop a list of "emotion" words such as annoyed, angry, happy. For each, have pupils list situations in which the word described their feelings. Add to the list as different moods are experienced or new "emotion" words met.

6. Choose a recent experience shared by a number of students. Have them give as many words as possible that describe the mood of the experience (more appropriate in the junior division).

7. Complete a weather chart for each day by having the pupils give as many adjectives as possible that accurately describe the weather. At the end of a set period, compile a single list that reflects the range of words that can be used for this purpose. The precision of the words should be greatly increased in the junior division.

8. Have the students choose an idea they would like to write about and, as a group, develop a list of words related to the topic. Have them group the words correctly to express meaning or mood.

9. From a selection read in class, list twenty-five to thirty words. Have the pupils consider (i) which words are interesting to say, (ii) which words have sounds that suggest their meaning, (iii) which words suggest strength, (iv) which words are dull.

10. Suggest a topic such as fire, cars, a job. Have the group list words that might be used to discuss the topic in a way that indicates (i) pleasure, (ii) excitement, (iii) fear.

11. Watch a few minutes of a film (or TV) in which several people take part. Have the students each select one person and then give as many words as possible to describe how the person moves. This could be repeated using appearance or voice. An interesting variation is to have each pupil read his or her list while the other group members attempt to identify the subject.

12. Have each pupil choose a favorite sport and list all the words he or she knows that are associated with it.

13. Give students a key word, such as Toronto, Africa, Hawaii or jungle, farm, city, playground, hockey game, and have them give words that convey the impression given by the key word.

14. Have pupils develop a list of words that are similar in meaning (big, huge, large, tremendous). With the children, consider situations in which each word would be used, stressing that each has its own specific meaning.

15. Present the students with an object, a picture, or a situation. Have each child think of a single word that expresses the meaning of the item being considered.

16. Provide pupils with word histories that create interest in words. For example:

    (1) Pizzas have become a popular food in Canada. The pizza has been a food in Italy for over 2000 years. In the ruins of an ancient city (Pompeii) in Italy are little shops with shelves. The shelves show signs of having been stacked with cheese, olive oil, and special statuettes called "pizza makers." There are many old legends that try to tell from where the pizza came. One says an elf brought it to Italy, and another says merchants learned pizza making from the Arabs. Modern cooking experts say that the Arabs began pizzas. These experts say that the pizza crust is the same recipe that Arab nomads use today to make bread: water and flour but no yeast.

    There are experts who claim that the word "pizza" came from the "peets" sound the dough makes when it is pulled from the forming board.

    (2) If you eat with a companion, do you have to have bread? Tell the pupils that companion comes from two Latin words, cum meaning "together with" and panis meaning "bread." To the Romans, a companion was someone with whom they shared bread.

    (3) The post office will cancel this stamp. Draw attention to the lattice of lines across a used stamp. Cancelli is the Latin for lattice. The old Romans used a lattice of lines to strike out writing (more suitable for junior grades).

17. Discuss sources of new words in our language. Have the students develop lists of new words related to topics such as food, travel, space exploration, jobs, and so on (more suitable for junior grades).

18. Give pupils several root words, such as comfort, happy, fashion, act, and have them form as many derived words as possible.

19. Find a picture of a scene that will appeal to the pupils. Have them list interesting words that might be used in writing a poem about it.

20. Have the students study the groups of words below. What time period does each group represent?

(1) canoe
fur trader
coureur de bois
beaver
pemmican

(2) rocket
launching pad
space travel
planet
laser beam

(3) log cabin
oxen
spinning wheel
fireplace
outdoor oven

(4) television
computer
automobile
tape recorder
escalator

(5) ice cream
hot dog
pop
hamburger
chips

Have the students make up further lists.

21. Choose a situation or a picture. Under the headings sight, sound, touch, smell, have the pupils list words they might use in describing each.

22. Keep a class record of words or phrases encountered in reading that present interesting images or sounds.

23. Develop word lists related to special interests or topics being studied in other subjects.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN THE ORAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM

Learning activities recommended for use in the oral language program are categorized below.

1. Oral encounters with stories and poems

   - listening to stories and poems presented by the teacher, peers or media
   - sharing personal reading
   - telling stories (original and other authors' works)
   - telling riddles and jokes
   - dramatizing and pantomiming (including puppetry)
   - choral speaking

2. Oral composition and dictation

   - oral composing in teacher-directed groups
   - oral dictation by individual children
   - composing in small groups
   - editing in groups or pairs

3. Discussion and informal talk

    - sharing information and ideas through discussion groups
    - show and tell
    - current events meetings
    - working with new vocabulary
    - brainstorming sessions

4. Language play

    - fun with words, sentences, meanings

5. Direction giving

    - describing how to play a game, conduct an experiment, construct an object, find a location
    - listening to taped directions and following them

6. Formalized talk

    - interviewing
    - reporting

LISTENING

Listening may be described as the act of receiving oral language. (Bloom, Hastings, & Madows, 1971). Listening is a communication skill which is essential to learning. It is a natural receptive skill developed as children interact with selected sound symbols and meanings that surround them during their daily living.

Listening, however, ought not to be confused with hearing. Hearing, of course, is the basis for listening. It depends on the proper function of the ears, the nervous system, and the brain, but listening extends hearing to an active, thinking-related skill. A child must give active attention to the words, phrases, and intonation of a speaker and must comprehend the ideas presented by relating them to his own experiences. As the child listens, he or she is questioning, interpreting, and making judgements while forming his or her own image of what is being said.

Listening is an integral part of the oral language program within any classroom. It should be viewed as an ongoing process extending over all subject areas. Although it may be necessary to focus on specific listening skills at times, the use of integrated language activities is the best means of achieving the goals of the listening program. Children are selective in their listening behavior. They attend to those things which have meaning for them. If children are to continue to learn through listening, meaningful situations need to be provided.

The following suggestions may help in developing children's listening ability. A teacher should:

1. Provide comfortable physical conditions of optimum listening.
2. Speak in a tone, pace, and manner appropriate to the children's need for the specific listening situation.
3. Avoid excessive talking and needless repetition in teaching.
4. Help children develop guidelines for effective listening.
5. Avoid overuse of listening for the purpose of recall only and encourage children to think about what they hear.

The Teacher as a Model Listener

In order for children to listen, they need a model--a listener who responds to children's intended meanings. Children who are listened to are more likely to listen to others.

Forms of Listening

1. Listening to extend learning
2. Listening for purpose of responding to speakers, writers
3. Listening to enjoy conversing and discussing with others stories, poetry, music, etc.
4. Listening to evaluate
5. Listening to extend ability to reason, to interpret, to make inferences.

Developing Oral Vocabulary

The beginning listener gradually develops meanings for words after hearing the same sounds repeatedly that are associated with objects, things, people, or events. In order to develop an extensive oral vocabulary, children need to have a great variety of meaningful experiences to talk about. Teachers can become acquainted with and can question children about their experiences so that the meaning derived from those experiences will allow children to build upon and extend their earlier experiences.

Examples of children listening found on the preceding pages:

1. To respond to intended meaning - In the discussion of The Mighty Hunter, each child responds appropriately to speaker; see especially student 1 and 2 in first several lines.
2. To enjoy songs and chants - In the "Creative Expression" section.
3. To evaluate - In the discussion of The Five Chinese Brothers: "I don't like the part where they threw him into the water. That wasn't nice."
4. To extend learning - In lines 3 and 4 of the same discussion when Andrea asks what 'violent' means and Colin explains.

For further examples, see Moffett (1973), pp. 70-84, 131-132; and Benjamin Bloom, et al. (1971), p. 413.

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WHAT IS LITERATURE?

Literature, as used in this guide, is not to be confused with a narrow definition of the term which singles out our "GOOD LITERATURE" and "THE CLASSICS" and excludes all else. Literature is to be treated as an activity, not as a discipline. The activity of literature encompasses fiction, non-fiction, print and non-print, media, poetry, prose and drama. It doesn't respect neatly packaged subject areas as it moves into every dimension of human experience. It taps culture, past and present. It demands the use of skills as diverse as hypothesizing, storytelling, problem-solving, and sharing. It is experience with language and through language.

Literature is:

nursery rhymes
nonsense rhymes
skipping games
finger games
biography
autobiography
fairy tales
folk tales

sound
sense
mood
movement
information
interest
convention
culture

understanding
feeling
dreaming
playing
knowing
caring
accepting
sharing

living and lived.

RATIONALE: WHY LITERATURE

Children's literature is a basic component of the language arts program in the elementary school. The child's enjoyment of literature is, first of all, of value in and of itself; but secondly, it is a means through which children gain competence in all aspects of the language arts.

Literature is an integral part of language learning. Through listening to rhymes, riddles, jingles, songs, poems and stories, children learn the sounds and patterns of their language. They sense the symbolic nature of language in realizing that the sounds represent ideas. Literature further enhances language learning by providing the background for understanding the culture from which the language has developed. Through enjoying and sharing literature with others, children come to a realization of the social nature of language. They also learn that language is primarily oral and that writing and reading merely represent the spoken word.

Much of this learning starts before children reach school age. The school must intensify and extend the literary experiences of its pupils, making sure to tailor the program to fit their pre-school experience. In this context, literature is an important part of the language arts program for the early years.

Numerous research studies confirm the belief that early, planned exposure to literature greatly improves children's language ability, including the facility to listen, to write, and to read. One study by Irwin (1960) indicates that the systematic reading of stories to infants over an eighteen-month period will increase the vocalization of two-and-one-half-year-old children. In Durkin's (1961, 1964) studies of children who learned to read before entering school, she found that all her early readers had been read to from the age of three or before. Chomsky (1972) measured the language acquisition of thirty-six children between the ages of six and ten and found a high positive correlation between their linguistic stages of development and their previous exposure to literature. Cohen's (1968) study showed that reading aloud regularly to twenty classes of seven-year-olds was instrumental in bringing about significant gains in their vocabulary and reading comprehension scores. These studies and others confirm the important role literature plays in developing the language power of children.

GOALS

The overall aim of the literature program is to expose children to a wide variety of literary forms. During the early years, literature should not be taught; it should be experienced. This experience with literature should:

1. Stimulate the imagination;
2. Stimulate the desire to read, write, talk and listen;
3. Develop and strengthen the entire range of language skills;
4. Deepen and broaden an understanding of one's self and others;

5. Extend vicariously one's life experiences beyond the immediate time, place and culture;

6. Result in a growing ability to make value judgements;

7. Develop and extend children's interests.

TEACHER STRATEGIES FOR THE LITERATURE PROGRAM

Literature should provide rich experiences through a variety of activities. Certain strategies can be suggested for activity planning.

Teacher Initiated Activities

1. Reading to children

   - Teacher or student reading stories, poems, rhymes, etc., to an audience

2. Storytelling

   - Teacher or student telling a story in own words to an audience

3. Multimedia Presentation

   - Presentation of literary ideas through films, tapes, slides, filmstrips (handmade, commercial); music; dance; rhythm; art (painting, sculpture); puppetry (commercial, handmade); pictures; objects; magnetic boards; television; radio; overhead projection; doll characters; view masters

Through the combination of these literary experiences and development of language skills, the student should soon be able to initiate her or his own literature activities.

Pupil Activities

- Reading independently a large variety of materials
- Sharing stories through retelling and recasting
- Responding through art and music
- Dramatizing and role playing
- Writing stories

In developing a literature lesson, teachers should consider the following steps:

1. clarifying purpose
2. selecting material
3. presenting content
4. selecting follow-up activities

The following charts relate strategies to the appropriate activity.

STEPS IN LESSON DEVELOPMENT	READING TO CHILDREN	STORYTELLING	MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION
1. Clarify Purpose			
-for enjoyment	•	•	•
-for language development	•	•	•
-for vocabulary growth	•	•	•
-for developing a feel for language	•	•	•
-for broadening experience	•	•	•
-for promoting a positive attitude toward literature	•	•	
-for a warm-up for other activities	•	•	•
-for creating a warm classroom environment	•	•	
-for providing readiness for other language skills	•	•	•
-for maintaining cultural traditions		•	
-for providing multi-sensory experiences			•
-for creating a desired mood	•	•	•
2. Material Selection			
Wide range relative to -			
-age	•	•	•
-language and cognitive development	•	•	•
-interest of children	•	•	•
-clarified purpose	•	•	•
Including wide range of -			
-content	•	•	•
-concepts	•	•	•
-topics	•	•	•
-style	•	•	•
-vocabulary	•	•	•
Format -			
-black and white text with or without illustrations			

STEPS IN LESSON DEVELOPMENT	READING TO CHILDREN	STORYTELLING	MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION
-hard or soft cover	•		
-current and in good condition			•
3. Presentation			
Preparation			
-previewing material	•		•
-checking equipment			•
-directing student attention	•	•	•
-using appropriate student and classroom arrangement	•	•	•
Environment			
-providing pleasant and relaxed setting	•	•	
-avoiding distractions	•	•	•
-providing special "story corners"	•	•	
Delivery			
-using variation of voice, tone and loudness	•	•	
-using appropriate expression	•	•	
-communicating to audience through eye contact, body gestures, etc.	•	•	
-experimenting with use of machines (stills, etc.)			•
4. Follow-Up*			
Activities for -			
-skill development	•	•	•
-discussion and sharing	•	•	•
-independent reading	•	•	•
-creative writing	•	•	•
-research	•	•	•
-dramatization	•	•	•
-field trips	•	•	•
-presentations	•	•	•

STEPS IN LESSON DEVELOPMENT	READING TO CHILDREN	STORYTELLING	MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATION
-puppet shows	.	.	.
-meeting with resource people	.	.	.
* With the integrated approach, follow-up activities will often be incorporated into other parts of the language arts program as well as other subject areas: art, music, science, math, etc.			

SAMPLE LITERATURE LESSONS

SAMPLE LESSON 1

Activity: Reading a story book to a multi-grade (1-3) class

Possible Purposes:

- for enjoyment, language development, vocabulary growth
- to develop the skill of making comparisons
- as a warm-up for drama activity and creative writing

Material Selection: "Three Billy Goats Gruff"

- repetition appealing for younger children
- story content applicable to skill development

Presentation:

- Teacher familiarizes himself/herself with story.
- Story could be read in area appropriate for dramatization (follow-up activity).
- Teacher's voice, tone, volume, etc., should be related to story content and skill objectives (comparison and contrast).

Follow-Up Activities:

- retelling of the story to younger children, having them join in on repetitive parts
- dramatization of the story
- discussion of differences among the billy goats gruff (size, appearance, voice, manner of walking, ways of handling the troll)

- development of categories of words (e.g., small, medium, large goat; troll, good troll, bad troll)
- dramatization through puppet shows and mini-musicals
- extension of vocabulary in physical education classes - skipping, trotting, tromping, etc. (noticing contrasts)
- discussion of story from goats' or troll's point of view

SAMPLE 2 - An Integrated Lesson

Activity: Studying a poem

Possible Purposes:

- for enjoyment, developing a feel for language, promoting a positive attitude toward literature
- for creating a warm classroom environment, providing a multisensory experience, creating a desired mood
- for integrating listening, speaking, reading, writing

Material Selection: "Black" by Mary O'Neil, a selection in

Hailstones and Halibut Bones (1961)

- useful for developing sensitivity to mood
- useful for providing a means to enjoy the beauty of words and form

Presentation:

In a darkened room the teacher reads the poem expressively and, at the end, strikes a match so the flame "leans against black." Attentive listening is encouraged by alerting the children ahead of time to discover the sounds, feelings, and pictures which are suggested. Lively discussion will follow as pupils share their discoveries and their own reactions to this and other colors.

Follow-Up Activities:

Oral reading by individuals or choral reading by groups is a natural follow-up. Excellent results have been obtained by having pupils dramatize their feelings about the various colors, making suitable sound effects and moving rhythmically either to a drum beat or to "color" music. A final activity may be to have each person write (or paint) his or her interpretation of what a particular color means or suggests. These poems and pictures make an attractive display or class booklet. When work is to be shared, all children are motivated to produce their best handwriting and spelling.

STORYTELLING

Storytelling is one of the best ways of both communicating with a group of youngsters and of reaching into the common experiences of human beings through all ages. Briefly, storytelling is not reading a book or reciting a text that has been memorized, valuable as those experiences are. It is reaching into those tales that come from the oral tradition, and recreating them for a new audience. Starting with the tales collected from the oral tradition makes sense because their very structure is dictated by oral language. Such tales are thus the easiest to learn. One of the finest practitioners of the art of storytelling, Ruth Sawyer (1962), shares her understanding of the art in The Way of the Storyteller (Penguin). Hers are the best words to summarize all that is required:

> The art of storytelling lies within the storyteller, to be searched for, drawn out, made to grow. It is compounded of certain invariables and these can be stated. Experience--that faring forth to try one's mettle . . . The building of background--that conscious reaching out and participation in all things that may contribute to and illuminate one's art. Creative imagination; the power to evoke emotion; a sense of spiritual conviction. Finally a gift for selection. This last comes partly out of experience, the innumerable times of trying out a story and summing up the consequences . . . and [partly] ingrained after years of experience. (pp. 26-27)

For Canadian educators, there is now an exceptional collection of Canadian stories, Storytellers' Rendezvous: Canadian Stories to Tell to Children, compiled by a committee of the Canadian Library Association (1979). For each tale, the approximate telling time, age suitability, source, and the contemporary teller from whom the tale was collected is given.

BOOK SELECTION

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUITABLE FICTION

Quality literature for children, like quality literature for any age, has as prime ingredients:

1. distinction of character
2. elegance of style
3. depth of theme
4. liveliness in plotting
5. complexity of meaning

Within the large body of literature composed of oral lore and the more recent tales by known authors, there is an array of choices to meet nearly every need and interest a child may have. Early experiences are obviously best when there is that magical meeting of the "right" book with the "right" child at the "right" time. If that happens a few significant times, the child is marked, one hopes, for life with a desire to repeat the experience again and again.

Distinction of Character

The "right" books have strong, distinctive central characters, often reminiscent of the child reader. Maurice Sendak's (1963) Max, in Where the Wild Things Are, is memorable. Much of Max is revealed in the opening sentence: "The night Max wore his wolf suit and made mischief of one kind/and another/his mother called him 'WILD THING' and Max said 'I'LL EAT YOU UP!' so he was sent to bed without eating anything."

Quickly, then, we can suggest that Max is: mischievous, adventurous, sometimes rebellious, and certainly a fellow who plays hard.

Max has a special strength--a powerful imagination--so that "that very night in Max's room a forest grew . . . and grew . . ." Max sails to the land of the "wild things," where he controls the frolicking beasts with his own "magic brick." His controlling those wild things is the same as his controlling his own wildness. He can soon re-admit his need for parental love and control in a home where suppers wait, even for young "wild things," and are, as the final two reassuring words state, "still hot."

In an unusual picture book that speaks to almost any age, The Missing Piece by Shel Silverstein (1976), the title names the concern of the central character: "It was missing a piece. And it was not happy. So it set off in search of its missing piece. And as it rolled it sang this song - 'Oh, I'm lookin' for my missin' piece/ I'm lookin' for my missin' piece/ Hi-dee-ho, here I go/Lookin' for my missin' piece.'" "IT" has no name, but IT is, like Max, memorable.

Elegance of Style

Elegance of style does not mean difficulty of vocabulary, but it does mean rhythm. In The Educated Imagination, Northrop Frye (1964) remembers one of his professors cautioning, "Get the rhythm right, and the sense will take care of itself." The best expression of imaginative thought or of straight fact has the directness and the rhythm of good conversation.

The good read-aloud text is so rhythmical that one can feel the rhythms and might even say, "It's like poetry." To achieve the rhythm, authors often seemingly violate old-fashioned grammar rules, as these lines, typed exactly as they appear page by page in Where the Wild Things Are, illustrate:

> That very night in Max's room a forest grew
> and grew -
> and grew until his ceiling hung with vines
> and the walls became the world all around

and an ocean tumbled by with a private boat for Max
and he sailed off through night and day
and in and out of weeks
and almost over a year
to where the wild things are.

Odd? Yes . . . a very long sentence and quite a string of "and's." Yet the "and's" allow the reader to keep reading smoothly on, and the single sentence captures the quickness of a flight in imagination from the "now" of the room to the "any-time" of "where the wild things are."

To continue with "IT" in The Missing Piece, "sometimes it baked in the sun/ but then the cool rain would come down":

And sometime it was frozen by the snow
but then the sun would come and warm it again
And because it was missing a piece
it could not roll very fast
so it would stop to talk to a worm
or smell a flower
and sometimes it would pass a beetle
and sometimes the beetle would pass it
and this was the best time of all

This time, not so many "and's" but a variety of connectors: "but," "so," "or."

A perceptive grade ten student, after hearing both these books read, commented that the Silverstein book had the "same rhythm" as the Sendak and that both were "like songs." Exactly.

Now, how does the prospective read-alouder know the good text? If you have some sense of body rhythm--if you are a good dancer, for example--your body will tell you which test is "right" for the tongue. You will feel a sense of "flow," given you by the ordering of the words. And, we could add, by the lack of frequent punctuation.

Depth of Theme

Depth of theme is another feature to consider in choosing literature for children. A general rule might be: "If you can say as much about the book as the book itself is long, you know you are dealing with a work of intensity and quality." Where the Wild Things Are, for example, has all of these themes:

A child needs discipline and love.
Anger is the mirror of love.
To grow, we must learn to control negative emotions.
In the growing, we need to "be" our own parents.
Imaginative wonderings can be a way of "playing-out"
    concerns in our real worlds.
A child is benefited by having a lively imagination.
The offer of warm food is the offer of love.

These statements of themes are expressed in almost the same number of words as the original text of the book. Silverstein's The Missing Piece, sparse in words, is as rich in thematic understandings. It, even more than Wild Things, is an example of a book that speaks differently to people at different ages: the more breadth of experience the reader brings to the book, the more the book suggests to him. The more mature reader can make more direct thematic statements, yet a book like this will "speak" as profoundly to the less mature reader as well--the understanding occurs, although the ability to verbalize may not be as developed.

Liveliness in Plotting

Good read-aloud titles have lively movement. H.A. Rey's (1941 and others) Curious George books are so popular because the curious monkey is similar to his devoted readers in the desire to break away from his comfortable and routine existence to explore the larger world. Once George begins an adventure, the action is brisk.

In his short critical work, Aspects of the Novel, E. M. Forster (1954) distinguishes between "story" and "plot." "Story," he contends, is the "and then . . . and then . . . and then . . ." frame upon which all narrative builds--even the narrative with which we recount our own days: "Yesterday, after work, I stopped off at The Bay . . . and then I ran into Sylvia. . . and then we went for supper at Hy's . . ." By distinction, "plot" is the muscle upon the bone of "and then . . ." "Plot" enriches, providing both detail and motivation for the action, often adding, for adult treatment, extensive internal exploration by characters as they contemplate the just-past moments of the story.

The broad category of folklore contains tales that are primarily "story," but, while spare, contain such psychological truth that the richness of "plot" is suggested. Fairy tales, in particular, are good choices to read to children. Many of them should be read and read often because they demonstrate the strength of practiced story; they clearly define necessary stages in character development; they treat all the themes that have ever appeared in the literature of our heritage; and as the next section emphasizes, they also have complexity of meaning.

Complexity of Meaning

The fairy tale, one of the oldest forms of story, is an example of complexity. On the surface, a story like "Rapunzel" seems a clear case of punishment for misplaced desire (the mother's loss of her child); acceptance of restricted life until adventure intrudes (Rapunzel's acquiesence in her life as prisoner of the witch until the prince arrives); and natural adolescent "breakout" when a prospect for adventure appears (Rapunzel's reaction to the prince). Just as the plot of the story is more complex than indicated, the levels of meaning are greater. In knowing this story, we are also at some level learning that: coveting another's property may bring punishment; "protecting" children from direct experience of life gives them no training for solving problems when they arise; a time of testing is required for maturity (the period in the wilderness suffered by both Rapunzel and the prince); love is freeing and painfully won; the behavior that is "witchy"--selfish, jealous, possessive--never "wins." In other words, the old tales like Rapunzel recount the mix of values held by the society (values which remain consistent with current attitudes) and some truths about what human beings must experience to become mature.

"The fairy tale," says Bruno Bettelheim (1975) in The Uses of Enchantment,

> begins with the hero at the mercy of those who think little of him and his abilities, who mistreat him and even threaten his life, as the wicked queeen does in 'Snow White' . . . at the tale's end the hero has mastered all trials and despite them remained true to himself, or in successfully undergoing them has achieved his true selfhood. He has become an autocrat in the best sense of the word--a self-ruler, a truly autonomous person, not a person who rules over others.
>
> In fairy tales, unlike myths, victory is not over others but only over oneself and over villainy (mainly one's own, which is projected as the hero's antagonist). If we are told anything about the rule of these kings and queens, it is that they ruled wisely and peacefully, and that they lived happily. This is what maturity ought to consist of: that one rules oneself wisely, and as a consequence lives happily. (p. 128)

THE READ-ALONE BOOKS

So far, the discussion concerns books to be read aloud. There are books, too, that should not be read aloud. One set includes those that are designed to be read alone by the beginning reader. These works, while enormously beneficial for their specific intent, lack that stylistic flow that makes for a good read-aloud text.

For example, Arnold Lobel's Owl at Home is exceptional in showing what can be done with a limited vocabulary by an author with a real sense of characterization, drama and balanced structure. It still does not read aloud well. Try reading the following passage aloud, adhering strictly to all punctuation marks. Do you feel the difference between this and passages from good read-aloud books?

OWL AT HOME

Owl was at home.
"How good it feels
to be sitting
by this fire," said Owl.
"It is so cold
and snowy outside."
Owl was eating
buttered toast
and hot pea soup
for supper.

> Owl heard a loud sound
> at the front door.
> "Who is out there,
> banging and pounding
> at my door
> on a night like this?"
>
> Arnold Lobel (1975)

One of the Macdonald First Library titles, Fire, is another example of the kind of writing that makes the body jerk in response, warning that this is no work to read aloud:

> Fire is very important to us.
> Without fire we could not live as we do.
> We use fire to heat our homes.
> We use fire to cook our food.
> Fire gives us light to see in the dark.
> Fire can be our enemy, too.
> When a fire gets out of control it destroys everything in its path.
> Every year fires destroy hundreds of houses and great areas of forest.

Only the next-to-last statement is a complex sentence, giving some variety and the possiblity for establishing an interesting rhythmic pattern. Reading through the first six statements causes the body to "jerk" in much the same way it is jerked when the clutch doesn't properly engage on a standard transmission.

By contrast, a book on the Jewish Holidays by Margery Cuyler (1978) has an easy storytelling, or "talking," style:

> All Jewish holidays, except Rosh Ha-shanah and Yom Kippur, celebrate nature or a historic event in the Jewish past.
> Most Jewish holidays are based on the holy days mentioned in the Torah, the Jewish book of law (also the first five books of Moses in the Bible). But unlike holidays that celebrate just one person such as George Washington, Jewish holidays honor the Jewish people as a whole. For example, in ancient days, Jews were forced to pray to the gods of the Syrians, who ruled their country.

Another kind of book which must be treated as a read-alone is the one that treats a subject that could be sensitive to one or several children in a group. There is no certain way of predicting this. When one senses an error in selection, one must simply stop, put the book aside, and move on to something else. There are books that may be upsetting in a group which are effective in a private setting--when an adult and a child can read the book or the child can read alone.

Such a work is a book by Albert Cullum (1976). It probably should be read in private: it touches on matters that are too painful to be read any other way. Called You Think Just Because You're Big You're Right, it has a separate commentary on each page:

> She talks about me to everybody.
> I know - I hear her.
> She talks to her bridge club friends, and to the
>   cleaning lady.
> On my birthday, I heard her
> tell the doorman she gave birth
> to eleven years of trouble
> Well, if she didn't want me.
> why did she have me?
>
> My daddy goes away a lot.
> But he's coming back.
> You'll see.
> He's coming back, he wouldn't have left
> all those shoes in the closet.
> Sometimes I sit in the closet
> with all my daddy's shoes.

Although some of the pages in Cullum's book would work when read aloud, others, like this, should probably not be.

There is also no magic way of knowing when to supply a "private" book to a child. However, knowing a wide selection of books and knowing the children around you will help you develop sensitivity to the times the child needs privacy and to the books that are right for the private moments.

GUIDELINES FOR NON-FICTION

Non-fiction is that large body of writing that purports to tell the "truth," the facts, about subjects. It includes textbooks, of course, and it includes all separate works on specific topics--such as on magnets, or building a model airplane. It also includes biography and autobiography which, while often highly fictionalized for younger readers, still are inherently truth-telling exercises, summaries of the lives of real people. Non-fiction should meet the following criteria:

1. Elegance of style, already mentioned as a requirement for fiction (In non-fiction, stylistic quality is particularly demanded for biographies, personal histories, general histories, and group histories.)
2. Accuracy of detail, fidelity to the truth (related to reliability below)
3. Currency, especially in fields where information rapidly changes (Copyright date is one way of checking currency.)
4. Well-selected illustrations that clearly enhance points in the text

5. Reliability in authorship (In every field, there are a handful of careful writers who can usually be trusted to communicate to younger readers abstract information so common in fields like science.)

6. The "extras" that are essential in making a book really useful:

   - a clear table of contents
   - an index
   - a glossary, if there is new and difficult vocabulary
   - illustrative tables
   - appendices of additional information that does not easily insert in the text

7. Honesty to the original, for example:

   - No anthropomorphism when animals are discussed.

   - The presentation of life as a whole instead of in selected "nice" pieces. This has brought sensitive non-fiction treatments of difficult subjects such as death and divorce.

When People Die by Joanne E. Bernstein and Stephen V. Gullo (1977) has a few markedly fine passages:

> People die because they have lived. Health is a part of everyone's life. All human beings die because, while they have been living, their bodies have been gradually wearing down.
>
> The parts of the body break down ever so slowly, in an aging process which begins at birth. Children's bodies do a great deal of growing and very little breaking down.
>
> Adults' bodies do very little growing and start to break down more rapidly. By the end of the aging process, the body can no longer keep itself going. This is normally the time when people die.
>
> For all men and women, loving people and being loved is important.

Interestingly, this book appears to be one that could be shared with a group, especially when a death of some impact had occurred, such as the death of a class pet.

POETRY

The most natural of all expression--poetry--is the one most sadly ignored at times. Every child needs a heavy dose of the traditional Mother Goose rhymes that have come over from Europe, and every Canadian child deserves an introduction to the current Canadian Mother Goose-rhyme-maker, Dennis Lee. With full intent, Lee uses the rhymes and some of the phrasing of the old rhymes to create, in Alligator Pie (1975), Nicholas Knock and Other People (1977), and Garbage Delight (1978), new rhymes with a specifically Canadian flavor:

Wiggle to the laundromat,
Wiggle to the sea;
Skip to Casa Loma
And you can't catch me!

The "higgledy piggledy" of the "fat hen" of old rhyme is, for Lee:

Higgledy piggledy
Wiggledy wump,
I met a man
Who caught a mump:
With his left cheek lumpy
And his right cheek bumpy -
Higgledy piggledy
Wiggledy wump.

[And for Maurice Sendak (1967), it becomes Higgledy Piggledy Pop in the book of the same name.]

Every child needs lots of street/playground rhymes. He'll learn these from his friends, but they can be brought into the classroom, too. Every coming-in time could be marked by a poem. Say a poem, sing a poem, be challenged by a poem, as in Dennis Lee's tongue-twister:

Someday I'll go to Winnipeg
To win a peg-leg pig.
But will a peg-leg winner win
The piglet's ill-got wig?

Every child should get to know the nonsense rhymes and wonderful limericks of Edward Lear; should learn that, for Ogden Nash (1965), a baby is defined briefly: "A little talcum/ Is always walcum." He should know that Hilaire Belloc wrote cautionary tales patterned, sometimes, after the famous Slovenly Peter by Heinrich Hoffman (1909).

she should learn that William Cole is a reliable editor of collections of poems that offer fun and honesty in the way he sees the world: Beastly Boys and Ghastly Girls (1964), for example.

Even though early experiences with poetry are probably best when highly rhythmical, somewhat nonsensical, and predominantly humorous, there is a place for the quiet lyric, especially before nap time at home or at school. Dennis Lee's (1977) Nicholas Knock and Other People concludes with bedtime poem-talk:

Over every elm, the
    half-light hovers.
Down, you lie down too
Through every shade of dusk, a hush
    impinges. Robins
settle to the nest; beneath, the deep earth
breathes, it
    breathes. You too lie

down, the drowsy room is
close and come to darkness . . .

It is also essential children have early exposure to the poetry that takes ordinary experience and condenses it imaginatively, with precise vocabulary, into a picture or image. The poetry that uses language that is compressed, clarified, and focused in sharp images is perhaps the finest of all, stimulus to full freedom of the imagination. This poetry often is not rhymed and may take any of a variety of forms--some controlled, some free. A good example, and one easily understood by any young child who has experienced the loss of a friend, is Langston Hughes' "Poem," which captures the sadness of parting from a loved friend. It is the final poem in A Poison Tree and Other Poems (1977), a collection of exceptional poems accompanied by sensitive drawings by Mercer Mayer.

Poems that communicate with sharp images may be found in surprising places. Jane Yolen's Dragon Night and Other Lullabies has verses that are primarily light and rhymed, supposedly "spoken" by parent Whale, Bear, Wolf, Cat, Giant, and others talking to their children. "Mother Wolf's Hum" however, is rather different:

Sleep young wriggler.
Under your grass coverlet,
Under your earth sheet.
Do not be surprised to find
That morning is just as dark.

There are two collections from Oxford University Press that offer exceptional choices for reading. Edited by Barry Maybury (1970, 1972), they both include thematically-clustered poetry by the finest of the poets of the western world and by talented youngsters, aged ten and up. They include selections from authors such as Gerald Durrell, Dylan Thomas, and James Joyce. The collection called Wordscapes treats the themes "Senses," "Weather and Seasons," "Creatures," "Places," "People," "Riddles and Rhymes," "Activities," and "Moments, Thoughts and Feelings." Thoughtshapes includes "Strange Worlds," "Islands," "Ruins and Remains," "Creatures," "People," "Memories," "Reflections" and "Story."

Children who read poetry best and with pleasure are probably those who have had guidance in freeing and expressing their imaginations in the way that the poet does. One of the poets in the Manitoba Artists in Schools program has a number of concrete suggestions for guiding children. Have children list a number of items/creatures they can think of under the headings "Animals" - "Furniture" - "Food." Then have them join one from each column to create an image. "Frog" - "rocking chair" - "pizza" might fall together. The frog, then, must be acting in some way with the rocking chair and the pizza. Also make descriptions more precise: what kind of frog? what colour? what kind of pizza? toppings? shape? With such encouragement, the child begins to experience what the poet calls the logic of the imagination rather than the logic of conventional rhetoric. (It was that logic of the imagination that gave Lewis Carroll relief at night from the logic of mathematics with which he dealt daily as the quiet professor, Charles L. Dodgson.)

The child can be made comfortable with the idea that what he writes need not "make sense," except "sense" as he wants it to be. Then, she or he also is ready to read and enjoy the images that come from the imagination of someone else. Along with the astute Manitoban poet and with W.O. Mitchell, the child is learning that literary expression is a way of "telling lies," of "lying about," or imaginatively altering, the world around.

ILLUSTRATED BOOKS

In the true picture book, the illustration is so integral to the story that the story is omcomplete without it. A prime example is Pat Hutchins' book, Rosie's Walk, in which the text makes the straightforward statement that "Rosie the hen went for a walk across the barnyard, around the pond, past the haystack, ... and got back in time for supper." Never mentioned in the text, but fully portrayed in the illustrations, is the fact that Rosie the hen was chased throughout her walk by a large red fox, who managed at each approach somehow to be foiled by his own awkwardness, while Rosie never discovered that he had been around.

In Sendak's (1963) Where the Wild Things Are, there is a "wild rumpus," called for the wild things by Max, that occurs on several pages with no text: the pictures "tell the story."

The pictures in Silverstein's (1976) The Missing Piece, exhibit the same tendency to contribute to plot. The last line of the passage quoted earlier--"and this was the best time of all"--does not refer to the passing of the beetle, mentioned in the previous line, but rather to the fact that a butterfly, alighted on the head of "IT," provided "the best time of all." The illustration tells us.

Illustrations then, can be treated with the respect of close attention because of their integrity to the story. Illustration can also be used to teach the "reading of a picture." The elegant Anno's Alphabet (Anno, 1974) asks for close attention to the borders around the illustration for each letter of the alphabet, borders that contain examples of several things beginning with the letter. Richard Scarry's books are popular "picture-reads" for the young: graphic clarity, humor, and reasonable realism combine to attract the child who is beginning to be intrigued by detail in everything.

Illustration can be used as an introduction to the many ways in which an artist can look at something we all see and present it in such a way that we see it differently. Children's books display examples of high realism, impressionism, expressionism, the abstract and, though rare, even surrealism.

A FINAL WORD ON BOOK SELECTON

According to Patricia Ross(1978), "Successful book pushing requires a teacher who reads children's as well as adult books, one who obviously enjoys reading." (p. 398)

To make us careful in the selection process, we should keep in mind two pages from Cullum's (1976) You Think Just Because You're Big You're Right:

> That librarian's got to be kidding!
> You should see the stupid books she reads to us -
> and always with that same dumb smile on her face
> I know all the endings before she even starts.
> She must think we don't know anything -
> that we're all a bunch of babies!

To keep us careful about what we do after reading or even before:

> We talk about a lot of things, my grandma and me.
>   About when I feel sad,
> and how sometimes it's all right to be afraid.
> Grandma always has time to listen to me.
>   I wish they would! ...

Remember that children's literature is not "kid-stuff." The medieval scholar, C.S. Lewis, is noted for academic essays, for humorous treatments of serious subjects for adults and for one of the finest fantasy series for young readers, The Chronicles of Narnia (1950 and others).

In an essay entitled "On Three Ways of Writing for Children," Lewis discusses two good ways and one bad. "The third way [his way] consists in writing children's stories because a children's story is the best art-form for something you have to say."

Literature lists, broken down by genre and grade level, will be made available, on request, from the Department of Education.

EVALUATION

The Literature Program

In evaluating the quality of the literature program in their classrooms, teachers may find the following questions helpful.

1. Is the program built with the students' needs and interests as a base?

2. Are the pupils exposed to a broad range of literary experiences including various forms of poetry, folk tales, fantasy, realistic stories, historical stories, informational literature (including biography)?

3. Is time allotted every day for the teacher to read to the class and for the students to read to themselves solely for enjoyment?

4. Is storytelling, both teacher and pupil, a part of the program?

5. Does the teacher encourage students to talk about the books they are reading? Are many opportunities provided for them to share their reactions to their reading experiences through buzz sessions, round table discussions or panels, puppet shows, drama, murals, mobiles, models?

6. Does the literature program provide a stimulus for other language activities such as creative listening and writing, dramatics, oral reading, choral reading?

7. Are the students' parents acquainted with the literature program and ways of assisting it?

8. Are the pupils encouraged to appreciate and use local resources such as libraries and book stores?

9. Does the physical set-up of the classroom enhance the literature program (current bulletin boards, book displays, reading and listening centres)?

10. Are various media used to enhance the literature program (films, filmstrips, video and sound tapes, records)?

Student Progress

Evaluation of a pupil's progress in literature can best be attempted in a variety of separate assessments of the child's behavior. The teacher may observe such things as the child's:

1. Absorption during the sharing of a selection
2. Participation in discussion
3. Verbalization of insights gained
4. Interest in looking up related materials to share in class
5. Increasing pleasure in reading on her own
6. Occasional desire to commit sections of literature to memory
7. Tendency to express himself creatively

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D R A M A

> Education is concerned with individuals; drama is concerned with the individuality of individuals, with the uniqueness of each human essence.
>
> Brian Way (1967)

Imaginative play has been a vital part of most children's preschool experience. It has been and should continue to be an opportunity for children to experiment, explore, and cope with their environment. Through drama, children move, create, and imagine.

Drama is an expression of ideas through the medium of the self.

GOALS

Through drama, students can:

- experience a greater involvement with their total being;
- sharpen their perceptions and their capacity to respond;
- develop concentration;
- make choices, use discriminating judgement, and define their own perceptions;
- be challenged to probe their inner resources;
- increase opportunities to engage themselves creatively;
- learn to work in groups;
- become more sensitive to the feelings of others;
- find channels for emotional release;
- develop self-motivation and positive attitudes;
- increase control over motor movements;
- think, express, communicate.

TEACHING IMPLICATIONS

The teacher should:

- provide opportunities for both spontaneous and planned dramatic activities;

- provide an environment that includes space to move, a variety of easy-to-use equipment (record player, dress-up box, percussion instruments, etc.);
- establish an atmosphere of trust and acceptance.

Teaching Strategies

Types of dramatic activities:

- sensory exercises
- games, songs
- concentration exercises
- creative movement to music
- role play
- improvisation
- mime
- puppetry

Processes Involved	Sample Activities
1. Perceiving	
developing awareness, stimulating imagination, triggering ideas	- observing new situations, objects - stories, films, pictures - listening to sounds, songs, music, stories, poems
2. Responding-Creating	
recognizing feelings and reactions to an event or object and acting in a highly individualized way within a framework	- listening to a story; discussing what characters do and how they feel - acting out parts of the story - developing improvisations that put these characters in different situations
3. Understanding	
deriving generalizations from the knowledge acquired	- discussing how characters react/feel before acting out the situation - comparing reactions to similar situations in students' own words - discussing alternative actions (dramatizing these changes)

Integration

Drama can be an integral component of any program that deals with the effective use of communication skills. Each section of this guide offers opportunities for dramatic activities that can be used for vehicles for: motivation, skill development, language development, follow-up, and general personal growth. Some of these activities are discussed in "Dramatic Play" in the first chapter. Others are listed below.

Oral Language:

- listening to stories, poems, etc., for ideas related to movement, story sequence, and characterization, that will lead to creative activities
- discussing ideas before activity, reactions after activity
- creating spontaneous oral composition
- engaging in meaningful dialogue through role play
- developing a wide range of vocabulary

Reading:

- understanding story development, imagery, and characterization for purpose of dramatization
- interpreting meaning, and author's intent, for purpose of sharing responses through dramatization
- developing vocabulary related to content of material

Literature:

- using literature for improvisation, role play, mime, puppetry, etc.
- exploring aspects of characters

Non-Verbal Elements:

- recognizing importance of body movements for effective communication

Creative Writing:

- using drama as a stimulus to creative writing or as a way of bringing creative writing to life

EVALUATION

As part of the creative process. Through discussion and self-motivation, evaluation can be on an ongoing component of creation and interpretation. (**Note:** Many activities can be repeated time and time again in the hope that repetition will provide fresh insights, yield new patterns of expression and communication, and prompt continuing efforts.)

As part of the communication process. An informal/spontaneous drama program should:

- be enjoyable;
- provide opportunities for children to grow in self-awareness and self-confidence;
- develop sensory, organizational, and observation skills;
- provide opportunities for children to work and cooperate with one another;
- provide opportunities for children to acquire language skills related to confidence in speaking, fluency of expression, adaptability of language and feeling, and appreciation of the beauty of language and literature.

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READING

AN OVERVIEW

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on understanding the process of reading in order to facilitate the teaching and learning of it. Psycholinguists and sociolinguists have developed more refined tools and techniques with which to assess the basic behavior underlying the reading process. Their work has emphasized the relationship between children's knowledge of language and the process of reading. Few scholars would now disagree with the belief that the reader who has the greatest resource of language cues available is likely to become the best reader.

In a recent study, Pearson (1976) refers to Goodman's three language cues, which follow:

1. grapho-phonic information (the sounds and patterns of oral language and the squiggles and patterns of squiggles of written language);
2. syntactic information (word order);
3. semantic associational information (knowledge of what words refer to in the real world and how words are related).

He states that real reading occurs when all three kinds of information are utilized in concert.

Every reader, including the beginner, is a user of language. The language and experience children bring to school provides a foundation on which to build reading instruction. The teaching of reading must focus on helping the learner make the connection between spoken and written language; while differing in form and precision, both spring from a common source--experience. Research confirms that children's achievement in oral and written language is related.

Reading is an interaction of the reader's language and thought with that of the author. It follows that our language arts programs must assist children of different backgrounds in relating to the language of the author. Teachers should receive training which helps them to analyze the language that children bring to school and should be prepared to adapt their programs to meet the differing language needs.

Ruddell (1966) states that:

> Research suggests that an instructional program designed to develop an understanding of the relationship between the child's familiar spoken system of communication and written language would facilitate his ability to comprehend written material.

Goodman (1968) has defined reading as "the reconstruction of a message from print." Meaning is an essential component in this definition. Reading is a thinking process; word perception is the starting point, but is only that. Children need help with word perception and recognition, but even more they need help with the thought processes that are essential to real reading.

At present, although much needs to be learned about reading, considerable information is available. Teachers are encouraged to link their knowledge of children and their language with their own knowledge of reading. In addition, a well-balanced program, which attends to the continuing development of word recognition and strategies for understanding what is read in meaningful contexts, will help children become fluent readers.

Implications for Teaching Reading

Instruction in reading in any language must be compatible with the child's oral competency in that language.

The method of instruction:

- must help the child understand the link between the spoken word and the written symbols that represent it;

- must adjust pacing to accommodate the child's ability to recognize and remember the written symbols;

- must lead the child to think about and respond to the message conveyed by the symbols.

The goal of all reading instruction should be to provide the child with the tools and desire to use language, both functionally and creatively, to expand and enrich his world.

Instructional Goals

Teachers should strive:

- to provide opportunities for appreciation and enjoyment of reading;
- to provide a comfortable environment to facilitate learning to read;
- to develop an understanding of the relationship between reading and other components of language;
- to develop an understanding of ideas, thoughts, and feelings of one's self and others, through reading.

Learning Goals

Pupils should show growth:

- in the ability and desire to read for a variety of purposes;
- in the development of thought processes necessary for decoding, interpreting, and comprehending written language;
- in the ability and desire to use reading as a tool for thinking, for problem solving and for personal growth.

READING READINESS

Readiness to read refers to the stage at which a child can learn a new reading task easily and profitably. A child achieves a stage of readiness through maturation and experience.

Learning to read is a continuous, developmental process, and readiness must be achieved at each stage in it. To be ready to read a given selection, a reader must have the necessary concept background, a knowledge of the vocabulary and sentence patterns used in the selection, and an active interest in the ideas.

Readiness to read develops gradually. The child develops interest in words as being the printed, meaningful symbols that represent the words he hears. He shows increasing ability to make accurate discriminations among these symbols and to relate them to words in his auditory vocabulary. These visual and auditory realizations gradually result in the recognition and understanding of words.

Objectives of the Readiness Program

The program should attempt:

- to expand the child's experiences so as to extend the range of interests and increase concepts and vocabulary;
- to stimulate interest in language and in books;
- to develop the basic cognitive, perceptual, and physical competencies necessary for the reading task.

Research on Readiness

The literature on reading readiness indicates that:

1. Chronological age alone has very little significance in readiness for reading.
2. Intellectual stimulation and the level of oral communication early in a child's life is an efficient predictor of early reading success.
3. A child's pre-school and early school experiences seem to be an important factor in his readiness and early reading progress.
4. Intelligence, but not mental test results, is a predictor of reading progress.
5. A child's ability to comprehend oral presentations of stories influences his readiness to read.
6. The visual skills of perception, discrimination, and memory are significant factors for successful early reading.
7. The nature of the program, its flexibility and provision for individual differences, affects reading success.
8. A warm classroom atmosphere that provides experiences for the development of language, thinking, and motor skills is effective in preparing children for reading.

Strategies

Children should be given ample time and opportunity to:

1. use oral language in a variety of situations to develop a feel for the sounds and rhythms of the language and to increase concepts and vocabulary;
2. listen to a wide range of children's literature to develop a sense of written language, to promote enjoyment and appreciation of good literature, and to extend concepts and vocabulary;
3. become acquainted with books through handling and reading them;
4. ask and answer questions to develop the desire for understanding and organization;
5. draw, scribble, and label to facilitate understanding of ideas and recognition of word patterns;
6. participate in group activities which involve pupil discussion and teacher instruction, to develop skill in language interaction and in ability to focus on a topic;
7. select free activities with well-chosen play materials to develop a sense of purpose, concentration, and persistence;
8. do projects that provide practice in discovering and developing a theme.

For more specific activities to use to promote reading readiness, please refer to: Early Childhood: A Time of Learning, A Time of Joy, Chapters 5 and 9, from the Manitoba Department of Education (Gibson, 1979).

Sample Activities for Beginning Readers

ACTIVITY	ELEMENTS OF LEARNING
Talking about real experiences and vicarious experiences (pictures, stories, poems, films, tapes, etc.)	Developing oral language expression including vocabulary Using imagination Observing audience reaction
Telling stories	Listening
Reading, reciting or making up jingles, riddles, poems, stories	Developing a feel for the flow, the sounds, and the patterns of language
Participating in dramatic play, puppetry, role play, etc.	Experimenting with oral expression Using own speech patterns Expressing thoughts through another personality Experiencing another person's problems by "becoming" that person Developing creativity
Solving problems	Developing language precision: - stating the problem (recognition) - identifying what is right or wrong about the situation (analysis) - thinking out a solution (hypothesis) - trying out the solution (testing) - deciding whether or not the solution is satisfactory (evaluation)
Participating in rhythmic activities, using playground apparatus, running, skipping, climbing; using crayons, paint brushes, scissors, beads, etc.	Strengthening and refining muscle control Developing hand-eye coordination
Playing games	Listening Following and giving directions Sequencing events
Manipulating puzzles	Recognizing likenesses and differences Recognizing configuration Recognizing parts of a whole Developing space perception
Classifying, categorizing and manipulating materials	Developing organizational ability Developing problem-solving ability Expanding inductive thinking Using creative thinking

SELF-CONCEPT AND READING

Research (Bloomer, 1969) supports the belief that there is a dramatic relationship between an individual's self-concept and success in reading. There are a number of ways the classroom teacher can help children develop the self-confidence to approach the task of learning to read.

1. Provide a classroom atmosphere that is warm and accepting of each child.
2. Learn to be an acute observer of the child's behavior and a sensitive listener to his or her words. Plan lessons which incorporate the child's interests.
3. Give each child as much opportunity as possible for one-to-one interaction with the teacher.
4. Try to be aware of and understand the learner's social, cultural and linguistic background.
5. Endeavor to match the teaching methods and materials to the child's ability and learning style.
6. Provide many activities in which the child can succeed and others can recognize this achievement.
7. Involve the child in planning and evaluating his own work. Demonstrate your belief in his ability to learn. Relate his present progress to his past achievement.
8. Avoid competition and comparison among reading groups. At times, use interest grouping.
9. Involve parents in the child's learning and encourage realistic, favorable expectations concerning her ability to learn.

Parental Assistance

Learning to read is an important but often difficult task for children, one in which both the teacher and the parent can cooperate. Parents who indicate an interest in helping their children learn to read may be given the following suggestions:

1. Talk with your child. Almost from the day she is born, a child is ready to express herself. At first, she will respond by cooing and gurgling. Later she will pick up a few words and sense the rhythm of language. Help her to add words to her vocabulary. The more words she uses naturally in her ordinary conversation, the more words will have meaning when she sees them on the printed page.
2. Listen to your child. Encourage him to express himself about things he has seen or done. Do pay attention when he is talking to you.

3. Read to your child. Every time you read to her, you are sharing a common experience and building a relationship. You are also developing an appreciation of books and reading. A child who has been read to is usually more anxious to read herself. Reading becomes enjoyable and important.
4. Write with your child. Every time you write with your child, you reinforce the ideas that thoughts and feelings can be recorded and reread and that the message can be communicated to an absent receiver.
5. Encourage your child to read. Share the ideas in the story, and help her to work these ideas out.
6. Encourage your child to write, either privately or to share his ideas with someone. Help him discover sources to help with the spelling of words he wishes to use.
7. Teach your child how to take care of books. She then will learn to regard books as friends.
8. Take him on trips. Even a short trip will excite his curiosity and interest in the world around him. Point out interesting things and give him new words and meanings of words.
9. Build up a reading atmosphere at home. Have books, magazines, newspapers, etc., around the house. Let the child see you reading frequently. Your child will tend to imitate you.
10. Encourage your child to join a public library. Don't tell her what books to select, but encourage her to select books she wishes. In this way, she will develop confidence and satisfaction in reading.
11. Play language games with him. Puzzles, word games, Scrabble and Lotto will help him with his spelling and reading.
12. Buy books and children's magazines with your child. A child who owns a few books is usually interested in reading, and owning a few special books adds to the joy of reading.
13. Accept your child as she is. Avoid comparing her with her brother, sister or friend. We are all unique with different learning styles and rates, so encourage her to develop as much as she can.
14. Show a real interest in school. The parent's attitude is really the child's. You and the teacher are partners in the important job of teaching your child to read. An interested, relaxed, helpful parent is the most valuable co-worker.

Children learn to read by reading. The more they read, the better readers they become.

Yardley (1974)

READING COMPREHENSION

Comprehension is the heart of the reading process. In one sense, the term "reading comprehension" is redundant, as any reading which takes place without some level of thoughtful interaction between author and reader must be labelled empty word-calling. When a person reads he must comprehend, otherwise he is not reading. Although decoding has a greater emphasis in the early years than in the middle years, a child's first view of reading should be one which emphasizes the principle of meaningfulness.

Decoding skills should be taught as some of the tools which may help the child make sense of print.

As in oral language, the focus of written language should be on communication. The young child has used language to share thoughts with others and to expand knowledge by listening to others. After a wide range of repeated oral activities, the child should be able to transfer the focus of meaning to reading activities. The teacher assists the child by providing a reading program that reflects the child's experience and language and uses them to facilitate vocabulary growth and the development of decoding skills.

Comprehension Skills

Comprehension is not a skill unique to reading. The list of mental activities associated with reading comprehension (such as classifying; categorizing; discriminating; making inferences, conclusions, and judgements; predicting outcomes; and evaluating) are general properties of thinking that occur in many areas of learning. The difference in thinking between primary and middle grade school children may be one of complexity, moving from the concrete to the abstract in the materials used to develop thinking depth. An understanding of the process of thinking at various levels of mental development is necessary for the effective teaching of reading.

Reading comprehension skills can be organized in terms of convergent thinking or divergent thinking. When the child has sufficient word attack and vocabulary skills to understand and recall what has been read, inferences and judgements can be made by relating this new information to previous knowledge. Teacher and student questioning should reflect the different levels of cognitive development.

Guidelines for Expanding Children's Comprehension

1. Expose pupils to the many uses and pleasures of reading to establish a reason for comprehending.
2. Provide a variety of reading materials at the pupils' ability and interest levels.
3. Provide opportunities to extend pupils' experiences.
4. Provide opportunities for vocabulary growth.
5. Help students develop the ability to attend to the spoken or written words of others.
6. Help students form questions and make predictions.
7. Help students develop the ability to store and retrieve information.
8. Give students opportunities to react to ideas with critical and creative responses.
9. Give students opportunity to develop classification and organizational skills.

Means to Comprehend

Children need to be mentally alert and active to comprehend written language. Mental alertness includes the following faculties:

- Attention - The ability to attend is related to interest. It can be developed through interesting, concentrated, interactive discussion among a small group of peers. What each participant says depends on what his partner has just said. Unless he learns to attend, he has no basis for his response. Active, responsive receiving of others' words is the basis of reading.
- Recollection - Recalling depends on paying attention at the moment and on later efforts to retrieve the acquired information. Children can be encouraged to develop strategies for recalling, such as simple note-taking, summarizing, association or topic-centered discussion.
- Conception - Concept formation is directly fostered by sorting activities, topic-centered small-group discussion, card games, film viewing, and social interaction.
- Inference - Inference is the ability to "read between the lines." Anything that teaches relating and reasoning will foster this aspect of comprehension. Dramatizing, small-group discussion of reading, and writing activities are a few ways of developing inference comprehension.
- Interpretation - This mental operation involves associating inferences and structural cues, and of noting tone, focus, and emphasis. It involves being sensitive to word choice, patterns and form. This comprehension is best developed through involvement in oral discussion, dramatization, and oral reading.

Related Student Activities

- participating in oral discussions
- listening to stories, poems, rhymes, jingles
- reading books and looking at pictures
- viewing
- participating in a variety of experiences (e.g., cooking, field trips, crafts, drama)
- formulating questions during pre-reading activities
- posing questions and verifying predictions after reading
- using words in a variety of situations
- sorting and labelling objects, words and ideas

Assessing Student Ability to Comprehend

The following factors should be taken into account:

1. student's experience
2. student's language base
3. student's attitude to reading
4. student's motivation to read and understand
5. content of material
6. student's decoding skills

VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT

The development of each child's listening-speaking vocabularies, and the realization of his/her potential for reading, pose a constant challenge for the teacher.

Rich, vivid, precise, beautiful, sensitive words are the building blocks of communication. With them, children not only express themselves more exactly, but they observe more accurately, think more clearly, comprehend more deeply, relate to others more effectively, and understand themselves more fully. Teachers can exert an important influence in shaping their pupils' vocabularies. Vocabulary development in school occurs both as a result of teaching and of teachers' attitudes toward words. Enthusiastic interest in this, as in other fields, is contagious.

> A sense of excitement about words, a sense of wonder and a feeling of pleasure--these are the essential ingredients of vocabulary development.
>
> Deighton (1959)

Guidelines for Expanding Children's Vocabularies

1. Provide children with many direct and vicarious experiences, and link these to language. Take time to attach names and labels to what is done, seen, touched, tasted, smelled, heard, and felt.

2. Read regularly to pupils from a wide range of literature.

3. Help children to incorporate new words into their speaking and writing by creating opportunities for the words to be heard repeatedly and to be used in conversation, discussion, games, activities, written work, art, and drama.

4. Display new words in interesting, eye-catching ways.

5. Praise children's use of new words.

6. Encourage children to develop vocabulary charts based on themes or particular topics.

7. Teach and encourage the use of the thesaurus and the dictionary.

8. Use audio-visual aids to portray the meaning of words. Sometimes children need help in learning how to look and listen.

9. Teach new words encountered in a subject area, but be sure to present them at the experience level of the pupils.

10. Help pupils to use all their word perception abilities in deducing the meaning of new words.

11. Encourage pupils to keep personal records of new words encountered, learned, and used.

WORD PERCEPTION SKILLS

Word perception is the recognition of a word and the understanding of its meaning in context. Reading authorities have established four basic tools of word perception:

1. sight vocabulary
2. context (including picture clues)
3. word structure
4. phonics

Efficient reading involves balance and flexibility in using these tools.

So many sources are available on teaching word perception skills that no attempt will be made here to cover the subject fully. Teachers should note the following.

Sight Words

Sight words are significant in the strategies of all readers. They usually form the initial reading vocabulary which provides the young learner with an entrance to the world of independent reading. They form the foundation on which the other word perception skills are built.

To ensure pupils' success in mastering sight vocabularies, teachers should:

- teach words that are linked to the pupils' current experiences;
- provide many opportunities for pupils to practice words in meaningful context, so they develop automatic responses to these words;
- supply self-help references for pupils' use, including: labelled pictures, signs, key sentences, chalkboard dictionaries, individual word banks, charts previously read, printed forms of known songs and poems;
- avoid loading pupils with too many words to learn at one time; adjust the number of words to their ability.

Context (Including Picture Clues)

The most important key in identifying or in developing an understanding of an unfamiliar word is the context in which it is used. Children should be helped to apply their knowledge of oral language to make predictions about new words encountered in reading. Pupils benefit from planned instruction in the use of context clues. Most current reading programs place much emphasis on such instruction. The Language Arts Skills lists, published by the Manitoba Department of Education, describe categories of context clues, a knowledge of which is useful for teachers making up questions to guide children in their use. An ability to use context skills, in combination with phonic and structural skills, provides pupils with a useful tool for obtaining meaning from the printed page.

Word Structure

A study of word structure is concerned with the basic meaning units of our language, that is, with the root words and the various affixes that influence their meaning. Programs in structural analysis should include a study of root words, compound words, inflectional endings, prefixes and suffixes, contractions and possessives, and proceed from simple to complex. Structural analysis is best taught inductively, using the pupils' known oral vocabulary as a base from which to present the printed forms of the various meaning units. It is best learned in use, not in isolated drills. Structural analysis should be taught concurrently with contextual and phonetic analysis.

Phonics

Skill in the use of phonics is important to a beginning reader in identifying, in print, those words that are already in his spoken vocabulary. The ability to sound out words is a technique for expanding reading comprehension vocabulary to the size of speaking comprehension vocabulary. This is a considerable help since, for the primary school child, speaking vocabulary is likely to be ten times the size of reading vocabulary. The usefulness of phonics to any particular child depends on the size of his speaking vocabulary.

To benefit from instruction in phonetic analysis, a child needs to have an adequate speaking vocabulary, skill in visual and auditory discrimination, and reasonably correct articulation. She must be given the opportunity to practice the phonetic skills she learns in conjunction with semantic and syntactic information; i.e., contextual application.

Too heavy an emphasis on isolated phonetic skills induces children to believe our language is consistent in letter-sound relationships, that reading is really sounding out words, and that the act of reading is complete when the sounds are decoded into words. Getting meaning from the printed page should be the object of all reading instruction. When used with other word recognition skills, phonics can be a valuable aid in achieving this aim. More mention of phonics will be made in the writing and spelling sections.

Using a Dictionary

When a child has exhausted his word attack skills on all the available clues to pronunciation and meaning of a word, and has produced no useful result or a result of which he is unsure, he should turn to a dictionary. In order to use the dictionary, a child needs training in locating, pronouncing, and determining the suitable meaning of words. These skills can be taught according to the child's need for them and his general maturity. Many grade three pupils and most grade four pupils are ready for in-depth dictionary work. Activities useful in the primary grades for developing beginning dictionary skills include:

(a) making individual pupil dictionaries or indexed word boxes which list new words (see Spelling)
(b) building large wall-chart dictionaries for class use
(c) working with picture dictionaries
(d) working with commercial dictionaries, moving from simple to more complex types

ORAL READING

Oral reading has an important place in the overall reading program. Effective oral reading skills are useful throughout life.

Purposes for oral reading should be established for both the reader and listener. Students and teachers may use oral reading to present materials, to share information, to report, to prove a point, or to entertain. Each of these purposes involves an audience and a performer whose oral reading skills must convince her audience of her purpose. Oral reading may also be used by teacher and student to diagnose such skills as pronunciation of words, word attack, acknowledgement of punctuation, interpretation and performance. Teachers should be cautious about evaluating reading comprehension from oral reading alone.

In the beginning stages, most reading is oral. Many of the techniques employed in silent reading are the same as those used when reading orally. Understanding vocabulary and concepts, recognizing words, and reading by thought units for purposes of comprehension are essential if reading aloud is to be effective. However, there are certain objectives related specifically to oral reading which should be part of a balanced reading program. Therefore, students require instruction in oral reading.

Skills important to oral reading include:

1. the ability to project the voice in a flexible manner through the effective use of intonation, volume and pace;

2. the ability to convey meaning of the passage through accurate pronunciation of words and careful acknowledgement of punctuation;

3. the ability to initiate and maintain audience contact (includes eye contact).

Students should:

1. develop positive attitudes about reading aloud and listening to others read;
2. establish standards for quality of performance;
3. develop discrimination in choosing what to read aloud;
4. demonstrate growth in listening skills.

Teaching Strategies

Through reading a variety of literature to children, the teacher can model good oral reading skills. However, many of these skills should be taught deliberately.

Oral reading should be introduced gradually by integrating it with talking activities. Sufficient time should be given for silent reading of the passage, to enable the reader to become familiar with the overall meaning, to check unknown words, and to check correct pronunciation. Specific skills of phrase reading, voice control, enunciation and expression need to be developed. With adequate oral reading skills and a positive atmosphere, the student should develop self-confidence in using appropriate speaking techniques to communicate meaning to others.

A considerable amount of reading aloud can be justified. Pupils can experience pleasure when they read aloud or listen to others read if the group atmosphere is one of approval. Reading aloud fits well with the child's habit or responding orally.

Oral Reading Activities:

- reading announcements
- choral reading
- sharing stories, poems, and plays
- taping readings and reports

The following suggestions may be useful in developing specific oral reading skills.

Voice pitch - Use material that is easy to read, that will reduce tension for the reader.
- Record readings and discuss deviations from normal conversational pitch.

Expression - Use material that the child understands.
- Use poems and plays to reduce monotony of speech.
- Signify (underline words, etc.) what should be emphasized.
- Demonstrate the effects of acknowledging punctuation.

Enunciation - Train the student in auditory discrimination.
- Allow the student to hear his recorded readings.
- Have the student read in a whisper as this will require greater use of the lips and tongue.

When evaluating specific oral reading skills or using oral reading to diagnose processes of silent reading, use carefully selected material. Techniques of evaluation may be formal or informal. Standardized tests can be used for formal assessment. However, evaluation of specific skills is best achieved through informal diagnosis of oral reading activities, the use of checklists and anecdotal records.

SAMPLE ORAL READING CHECKLIST

1. Comprehension

   a. Transmits meaning successfully
   b. Interprets feeling effectively (humor, surprise, suspense, etc.)
   c. Knows many sight words
   d. Uses word recognition techniques easily

2. Fluency

   a. Reads in thought units
   b. Phrases correctly
   c. Observes punctuation
   d. Reads smoothly without jerkiness or hesitation

3. Voice and Speech Characteristics

   a. Can be heard easily
   b. Enunciates clearly and distinctly
   c. Uses suitable pitch
   d. Has pleasing voice quality
   e. Is free from strain and tension
   f. Reads at an appropriate rate

Oral reading in schools often takes the form of round-robin sight reading. This may be an unpleasant, even harmful, experience for children. It can distort the child's concept of what reading is. Reading aloud by sight should only be attempted when a child has become skilled at prepared oral reading. Oral reading by language-disabled or foreign language children should be handled with care and probably on an individual basis.

QUESTIONING

Pupil and teacher questions are considered to be the single most influential teaching-learning act. Most children come to school with a natural curiosity that manifests itself in the number of questions they ask. Teachers should ensure that this questioning is encouraged and extended. Although teacher questions should not constitute the dominant part of the verbal output in the class, they play a crucial role in the child's learning. Through questioning, teachers can either encourage or stultify the young child's curiosity, questioning, and thinking.

Purpose of Questions

1. To arouse and extend the child's curiosity;
2. To establish a purpose for reading and to focus attention on a topic;
3. To encourage the child to clarify meaning in what he hears and reads;
4. To promote the child's sense of self-worth;
5. To help the child develop cognitive skills;
6. To help the child develop a bond and a dialogue with the author and the material she reads;
7. To develop the child's vocabulary;
8. To help the teacher diagnose reading performance.

Strategies

1. Teachers should encourage children to ask questions by providing interesting objects, pictures, materials, and experiences that will arouse curiosity and stimulate questioning; e.g., "What would you like to know?" "What would you like to ask about these flowers?" Ample time and opportunity should be provided for children to participate in these activities.

2. Most children have difficulty in asking probing questions about things that puzzle and perplex them. It is important that teachers ask a variety of questions as models for the children's questioning, to foster both convergent and divergent thinking and to develop attitudes, abilities and skills.

   Models of questions:

   - Where is Humpty Dumpty? (literal recall)
   - What happened when he fell off the wall? (sequence)
   - What happened to him when he fell? (inferring cause/effect)
   - What kind of a person was Humpty Dumpty? (inferring character traits)
   - Why did Humpty Dumpty fall? (generating about eggs)
   - What do you think Humpty saw on the other side? (speculating)
   - How do you think the King's men and horses felt when they saw Humpty's accident? (hypothesizing)
   - What kinds of things did the King's horses and his men do to try to put Humpty together again? (problem-solving)
   - Listen to the sounds and the rhythm of the rhyme. What does it tell you about Humpty Dumpty as a person? (deriving meaning from figurative language)
   - If Humpty Dumpty were a member of Parliament, what kind of a politician would he be? (judging, detecting propaganda, checking author's bias)
   - Could you compose a rhyme to make a specific political comment? (applying information to a new situation)

   If children have difficulty in responding to these questions, teachers could investigate the following:

   - the teacher's understanding of the child's language

- the child's past experience
- the difficulty of the reading material
- the child's interest

3. Teachers should ask children the kinds of questions that would cause them to wonder and in turn ask their own questions.

   Teachers can help children ask different questions by commenting on the kind of question the child has asked:

   Example: "That's a good question. Do you think we can find the answer to that question by simply looking at the beaver tail?"

4. Teachers should help children to respond meaningfully to questions in a group; e.g., ways to answer, ways to disagree, ways to listen actively (see Oral Language).

5. Teachers should use questions as a diagnostic tool to determine the level at which a child is understanding information. Consideration must be given to both teacher-initiated and student-initiated questions. The child is likely to base his reading on the type of questions the teacher will ask (Guzak, 1967). However, the type of question the teacher will ask will be largely determined by the level of the child's understanding. For example, if the child is asking mainly literal comprehension questions, the teacher is well-advised to lead the child's comprehension beyond the literal, by asking more probing inferential questions.

   The types of questions which teachers may ask should be determined by the objectives the teacher wishes to accomplish.

   - Why are you asking the question?
   - What kind of thinking outcomes are you trying to stimulate?

   When formulating questions, teachers should consider the following types of comprehension:

   - literal
   - interpretative
   - critical
   - creative

ORGANIZING FOR INSTRUCTION

Different kinds of grouping are required for effective reading instruction. There is much value in individual and small group instruction: the materials may be specifically chosen for the child's level; intensive practice may be provided on special needs; the degree of individual responsibility is high; and opportunity for oral practice is multiplied.

But, there are also benefits in class instruction: the common interests and activities increase the sense of belonging to the group; there is an economy of teacher effort when a single activity may be shared by all. However, in order to meet the individual needs of young children in the classroom, grouping for instruction is advisable. It should be noted that:

1. No one way of grouping is better than another. Local situations, individual needs of children, and individual strengths of teachers will dictate the best system for a particular class.

2. Grouping should be flexible; groups should be changed as children give evidence of growth and as their interests develop.

3. The size of the group is not an absolute factor. Some groups should be small; others, in which children can assume considerable responsibility for independent work, could be larger.

4. Children learn from each other; the opportunity to share common learning is basic to good education.

5. Groups should be established on the basis of children's interests and needs (both academic and social).

6. Children should be allowed to form their own groups at times, on the basis of their common interest, research problems, and their ability to help each other.

INTEGRATION

Reading is a part of the communication process. It is directly related to other language arts and should be taught in conjunction with listening, speaking and writing. Reading instruction should consider the child's oral language, including knowledge of language patterns, as well as concept and vocabulary development. The integration of experience and language in concept formation should be recognized in all reading activities.

The "language-experience" approach to the teaching of reading is a deliberate attempt to take advantage of the natural relationships among the various language arts and use them in reading instruction. In this guide, use of language-experience methods is described in the Oral Language and Writing sections. The following sample unit shows how language experience can be used in teaching the beginning stage of reading.

A SAMPLE UNIT

Children who are unable to work successfully in a basal reader can be provided with reading materials that are based on their own experiences and are expressed in their own language patterns.

The following is an outline of some procedures that could be used.

The teacher selects a theme from the children's own environment which will provide them with meaningful experiences. One of the themes that was selected for a group of grade one students in a rural area was "Animals." Since all of the students lived on farms and had also encountered many of the common wild animals of the area, all had many experiences with animals.

Activities:

1. Children were asked to bring photographs and pictures of animals from magazines or newspapers. Magazines and newspapers were made available in the classroom for children who did not have access to them at home.

2. During discussion periods, children talked about their pictures. Their own photographs of animals brought out many of their own experiences.

3. All pictures were classified and labelled. (Classification was done under several headings. Some of the examples were wild and tame animals, woodland animals, and farm animals.)

4. One group of pictures, for example, of horses, was selected for a topic of discussion. The discussion included what horses do and the kind of care that they receive. After the oral discussion, a story was dictated by the children, and, the teacher, acting as their secretary, wrote it down. Several activities were done with this story. Some of them are as follows:

   The First Day:

   - The teacher re-read to the children the story they had dictated. Then the children read it with the teacher. The group talked about the sentences as units of thought, noting their beginning and ending. The most important (core words) were circled in each sentence, and the children noted which sentence had the most words. Individual pupils read sentences from the story.

   Succeeding Days:

   - The teacher printed sentences and words from the story on separate cards. The children took turns matching the cards to the same part in the story. The cards were also reassembled to re-build the story.

   - The children were given duplicate copies of the story. These were read and then pasted in a "story" scribbler.

- Other copies of the story were cut into sentence strips or words and used by the children to make the story at their desks.

- The story was used as the basic material for lessons in phonics (initial and final consonants), structural analysis (endings such as -ing and -ed), sight words, vocabulary development (word choice synonyms, etc.), and comprehension (cloze) exercises.

- Each pupil selected a favorite word from the story, which was copied on a card kept in the child's own word file. Some of the pupils made drawings to illustrate their word, and these, with the word printed underneath, were stapled together to make a book for the reading centre.

- The children made drawings of things horses can do and dictated a sentence to accompany each drawing.

- Using the topic "Horses," the teacher asked, "Where could you see a horse?" As the children responded, their phrases were recorded on chart paper:

    - in a field
    - in a ditch
    - in a pasture
    - behind a barn

  These phrases were charted alone and in sentence context.

5. Activities Using Other Animals as the Focus:

- When talking and writing about cows, the students made butter and ice cream. With a polaroid camera, pictures of the different stages were taken and were used to discuss the steps in the process and also to provide a stimulus for pupil writing. Skill teaching included sequencing, choosing the main idea, and vocabulary work.

- Films featuring animals such as "Gray Squirrel" were shown, with an oral discussion beforehand to prepare students for the viewing and afterwards to give them an opportunity to share responses.

- Many books of animal stories were available for children to look at, read, or listen to. Some, such as Bill Martin Jr.'s Brown Bear (1970) and Ten Little Squirrels (1971), were used as patterns for the children's own writing.

- Finger and hand puppets were available for the pupils to use in telling their own animal stories.

- Flannel graph pictures, for example, for the "Three Billy Goats Gruff," were used for oral language development.

- Animal stories such as "The Little Red Hen" were dramatized.

- Poems were used to introduce language patterns to serve as models for the composition of new stanzas:

RACCOON ON THE MOON

This is a raccoon.
This is a moon.
This is a raccoon on the moon.

The same procedure was followed with songs such as "Go tell Aunt Rhodie."

- Each child made a little book about an animal of his choice.

- Each child kept a file box of the words he could recognize in any context.

A list of books which describe the language-experience approach is included at the end of this chapter. It should be noted that this approach can be used successfully at any level and in conjunction with any other approach.

Using Literature to Teach Reading

Familiarity with a wide range of literature prepares a child for reading by helping to develop general language abilities. Patterns or structured language materials are especially useful in initial reading instruction because the child can use his knowledge of semantics and syntax to predict what the printed word is going to say.

There are many types of patterns based upon the cultural, linguistic, and rhythmic structures with which children are already familiar when they enter first grade. One of the simplest patterns is the repetitive structure in which a certain phrase or sentence recurs at various points in the story. Similar, but more complex, is the repetitive-cumulative structure, in which a word, phrase or sentence is repeated in each succeeding episode. Each stanza adds a new word, phrase, or sentence to the sequence, as in the well-known "This is the House that Jack Built." The patterns established by rhyme and rhythm are frequently used to produce predictable selections. Rhyme is sometimes combined with the repetitive and repetitive-cumulative structures to provide a highly reliable method of decoding print.

Familiar cultural sequences can also be used advantageously to aid beginning readers in the development of predictive skills. Many patterned selections are built upon enumeration, using either cardinal or ordinal numbers, such as "The Ten Little Indians." Again, rhyme and repetition are frequently combined with enumeration to produce a highly predictable sequence. Almost as popular as the enumeration patterns, are those based upon the alphabet. Alphabet selections range from the simplest one-word-per-letter pattern to complex patterns, in which the author writes longer phrases or sentences consisting only of words beginning with a single letter of the alphabet. Other familiar cultural sequences include the days of the week, the months of the year, the four seasons, and the basic colors.

The other major category of predictable selections is that in which the sequence of events enables the reader to predict future events; e.g., "The Little Red Hen" and "The Three Billy Goats Gruff."

All of the previously discussed patterns facilitate the development of predictive skills in young readers. Selections based upon these patterns are well-suited for "reading with" children. As the teacher reads the selection, the children are invited to "chime in" or read along whenever they think they know what is coming next. Impromptu choral reading frequently occurs as children interact with the sequential pattern, chanting the phrases and sentences in natural sounding language patterns.

The patterned language selections also often provide an impetus for children's own creative writing, as students improvise on the literary structure. Even children with limited vocabularies and experiential backgrounds can successfully create their own books by substituting their own words, within the framework provided by the patterned structure.

Numerous experiences with patterned books also facilitate the development of a sight vocabulary through repeated exposure to the words in dependable contexts. Many of the books have a repetitive stem, comprised of high frequency structure words. The child is able to read these words successfully as the phrases are repeated over and over in meaningful, patterned structures.

Because most patterned language selections contain some variations from the pattern, children find it necessary to look for multiple ways of unlocking print. They will find it helpful to apply their knowledge of sound-symbol relationships, configuration, and picture clues, but it is still the clue from the predictable pattern that guides and supports the decoding process.

The major value of the patterned language materials is that they enable the beginning reader to process the printed page in the same way as the mature reader, employing predicting, sampling, and confirming strategies from the first. The child is able to make accurate predictions of meaning and efficient use of visual information, thus practicing skills for becoming a proficient reader.

ADAPTING THE PROGRAM TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS

Invariably, there will be certain children who have difficulty with some or many aspects of the reading program. Following is a chart which may assist teachers in diagnosing problems and developing strategies to overcome them.

DIFFICULTY	POSSIBLE CAUSES	TEACHING IMPLICATION
1. The student is unable to cope with the formalized reading program (e.g., a basal reading program).	a) The child is immature.	a) Give the child time and opportunity to develop.
	b) The child lacks language proficiency due to insufficient experience, vocabulary and opportunity to use language.	b) Teachers should use integrative approaches (listening, speaking, reading, writing); e.g., language-experience.
	c) The particular program does not allow enough time for the student to acquire and practice the skills.	c) The teacher must adjust the program to the student by allowing sufficient time for pre-reading, on-going activity, and re-teaching.
	d) The materials and situation being used do not meet the needs of the particular student.	d) The teacher should try to select materials that are relevant to student needs and learning styles.
2. The child has difficulty with regular classroom programming due to: - physical factors (e.g., visual, hearing, speech) - learning disabilities (perceptual, auditory, motor) - emotional or behavior problems	Multiple causes	a) The child may benefit from one-to-one instruction from the classroom teacher, peers, aides, resource teacher, or clinician.

DIFFICULTY	POSSIBLE CAUSES	TEACHING IMPLICATION
		b) When possible, the child should be included in regular classroom language activities.
		c) The teacher may seek help from specialists (e.g., doctor, speech pathologist, psychologist) in determining cause of the problems and in developing classroom programs.

EVALUATION

Evaluation of reading will include appraisal of both the program as a whole and individual and group competency. This assessment of programs and children should be ongoing and take into account both long- and short-term goals. To conduct such appraisals, teachers will need a knowledge of:

- program objectives (general and specific)
- language development and the reading process
- materials
- individual student performance

Purposes of Evaluation

Reading Program

To determine:

1. whether reading activities are based on a knowledge of how children learn language;
2. whether reading activities provide for the development of thought processes;
3. whether the program facilitates attainment of specific objectives;
4. whether teaching materials take into account a range of reading abilities, interests, and cultural backgrounds;
5. whether reading is presented as an interesting and enjoyable experience;
6. whether the student is provided with a variety of reading experiences.

Individual/Group Competencies

To determine:

1. whether the student can comprehend material at a given level;
2. whether the student views reading as an enjoyable activity;
3. whether the student chooses a variety of reading material appropriate for a given purpose;
4. whether the student can apply other language skills to reading;
5. whether the student transfers thinking abilities to the reading activities;
6. whether the student is gaining skills specific to her level of instruction;
7. whether there are areas of strength and weakness.

Means of Evaluation

An appraisal of the total pattern of reading growth is best achieved by considering information from many sources of evaluation. These sources may include:

1. teacher observation (formal and informal) of pupil performance
2. student files - collection of student's work
3. records - anecdotal, cumulative
4. questionnaires - emphasis on attitudes, interests and tastes relevant to reading
5. informal and formal reading tests
    - teacher-made
    - published tests for use with given programs
    - informal reading inventories
6. standardized tests
    - survey
    - diagnostic

SUGGESTED RESOURCE BOOKS FOR THE LANGUAGE-EXPERIENCE APPROACH

Book Title	Author	Publisher
*An Experienced-Based Approach to Language and Reading	Braun & Froese	University Park Press
*Creative Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School	James A. Smith	Allyn & Bacon
*Dance and Language Experiences with Children	J. Boorman	Longman
*Key Words to Reading: The Language Experience Program Begins	J. Veatch, et al.	Merrill
*Language Experiences in Reading Books I, II, III	Van Allen	Encyclopaedia Britannica
*Learning to Read Through Experience	Lee & Allen	Appleton-Century-Croft
Literacy: Language-Experience Approaches	N. Goddard	Macmillan
*Manuals to Language Experience Reading Program	Thorn & Asociates	Gage
*Reading is Only the Tiger's Tail	McCracken & McCracken	Leswing (distributed by Peguis)
*Teacher	Sylvia Ashton-Warner	Simon & Schuster
*Teaching Reading as a Language Experience	Mary Anne Hall	Merrill
*Teaching the Language Arts	Elizabeth Thorn	Gage
*The Language Experience Approach to the Teaching of Reading	Stauffer-Russell	Harper-Row

Many of the more recently published basal reading series include much language-experience work, such as:

Expressways	Gage
Starting Points in Reading	Ginn
Nelson Language Development Readers	Nelson

*Available from the Department of Education Library.

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VISUAL COMMUNICATION

The place of viewing in the overall language arts program is an important one. Children's active involvement in a variety of visual experiences cannot help but enhance language development and learning. One way to motivate children to attend to and respond to messages presented in pictorial form is to make the classroom visually enticing and attractive. Teachers can select and display pictures which challenge children to become involved in interpreting their meanings. The involvement of children in preparing collages and bulletin board displays will help them focus on making visual statements which express their own feelings and bring new meanings to others.

Viewing in the language arts program should focus on understanding and responding to experiences which are organized and communicate visually. The media for visual communication may include:

- field trips
- displays
- models
- photographs
- pictures
- transparencies
- books
- newspapers
- filmstrips
- video tapes
- television

GOALS

Through the use of a wide variety of visual media, the students should be able to:

- attend to visual presentation
- identify what is seen
- comprehend what is seen
- relate what is seen to past experiences
- evaluate what is seen
- use what is seen to develop new learnings
- express meanings visually

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Presentation. The effective use of visual materials within the classroom involves aspects of:

1. gathering visual information
2. thinking about the information

3. responding with feeling
4. responding critically

Note: Some or all aspects may be dealt with in any sequence, depending on the purpose of viewing.

Integration. In integrating viewing into the language arts programs, it is necessary to take full advantage of what visual communication has to offer and to use visual and verbal communication to develop and reinforce each other. The activities listed below may be adapted to provide opportunities for children to develop the visual competencies mentioned above.

- viewing a series of pictures and discussing the theme
- planning graphic displays
- preparing a script to accompany a series of slides
- collecting magazine pictures and interpreting them
- writing and illustrating stories
- ordering pictures to tell a story and writing a sentence telling a story of the arrangement
- reading picture books
- developing slide-tape presentations
- viewing a single slide and describing in writing what it communicates
- preparing sets of photographs dealing with hobbies, sports, field trips or other areas of interest
- viewing a film which presents imagery without narration and discussing the settings and suggested story lines
- examining pictures displaying different emotions and interpreting the various moods and feelings they portray
- listening to a description and drawing a picture of it

EVALUATION

Tests are not available for measuring competencies in visual comprehension and production. Therefore, teachers will need to rely on informal techniques to obtain information on those skills which are amenable to assessment. Procedures which involve children will provide additional opportunities for them to maintain interest and to assist in planning relevant activities. Evaluation should be made in terms of the objectives and should focus on such aspects as the children's ability to understand visual communication at literal and interpretive levels and their ability to translate visual language into verbal language.

SAMPLE LESSON USING THE FILM "BAMBI"

Presentation - questions which should be used before the film is viewed

	Focusing Questions
Gathering Information	- What kind of animals lived in the forest?
	- What kind of disasters can happen in a forest?
Thinking about Information	- Why do you think Thumper and Bambi became such good friends?
	- Why would a forest fire be such a disasterous event for the animals in the forest?
	- What might have happened to Bambi if he had lost his parents when he was a fawn?
Responding with Feeling	- Which of the forest animals did you like the best? Why?
	- How did you feel when the animals were facing the forest fire?
	- What were some happy/sad times for Bambi when (a) he was a fawn; (b) he was a buck?
Responding Critically	- In real life would these animals be friends?
	- Do you like stories that have sad parts in them? Why or why not?
	- Why do you think the writer of this story chose this ending?

Integration

- Discuss other animal stories with sad parts.
- Prepare simple sets that could be used for dramatizing the story.

- Read or look at the storybook version of Bambi with the children.
- Have them write a play about this story.
- Have the children prepare large posters showing different feelings from the story; e.g., joy, fear, etc.
- Tell the story from different points of view (Thumper's, mother's, hunter's, etc.).

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WRITING

INTRODUCTION

The ability of children to convert their thoughts into speech will have a direct bearing on their ability to write. What they cannot say, at least to themselves, they will not be able to write down. In addition, the quality of this conversion from thought, or inner speech, to writing will depend on the richness of each child's previous language experiences. Children who display a highly sophisticated level of language usage, for example, usually come from homes and schools where they have been involved in a wide range of generative language experiences and have received some confirmation of the success or failure of their efforts to produce language.

A generative language experience is one that puts the child in the position of having to use or make language, and has nothing to do with a child's ability to describe the language or name any of its parts. With changing childcare patterns and the notable impact of television, children may lose significant opportunities to hear and produce language in the kind of communicative context that leads to growth. At least in some homes, there now seems to be far less time for verbal interaction between parents and children. Television, moreover, in addition to demanding silence from its viewers, provides no positive response.

In the face of these challenges, schools have an even greater responsibility than before to provide oral language experiences of high quality for all children. Indeed, in the early elementary years, this will be a very important part of the writing program itself.

The ability to use words well and to express oneself with sensitivity, clarity, and conciseness in writing is an achievement that, once developed, will be of lifelong value. To achieve fluency, children must have something real and personal to write about, a wealth of language with which to express their ideas, and the desire, opportunity, and time to write.

Goals of the Writing Program

The overriding goal of the writing program in the primary school is to help children express their ideas effectively in writing. Children should have the opportunity to acquire competence in expressing experiences, thoughts, and feelings in writing with clarity and sensitivity, by:

- mastering a vocabulary of words, phrases, and expressions through which personal feelings, sensations, and observations can be adequately expressed;
- experimenting with words, word patterns and idioms;
- developing a sense of sequence and logic that facilitates the progression from writing isolated phrases or sentences to the coherence of a paragraph;

- demonstrating an appreciation of style by incorporating in his own writing effective words, phrases, or techniques selected from those encountered in reading and listening;
- demonstrating a knowledge of the patterns of spelling and rules of punctuation required for clarity;
- writing legibly in a manner appropriate to her stage of development;
- using writing for creative expression (e.g., stories and verse);
- using writing for practical purposes (e.g., letters, notes);
- assessing his own writing in appropriate ways;
- appreciating that writing can be used to inform, to explain, to describe, to narrate, and to give voice to imagination and fantasy;
- developing sensitivity to audience needs.

Uses of Language

Many attempts have been made to classify the various uses and functions of language (Britton, 1973; Halliday, et. al., 1964; Tough, 1977). Such classifications are always arbitrary to some degree, since the differences between one approximate category and another are almost imperceptible. Study of one such classification system, however, may help teachers to become more aware of the need to provide opportunities for a range of different uses of language. Equally important, it may help teachers to understand the need to take time so children can develop gradually increasing competence in all these uses of language. Britton (1973) developed the following classification system, articulating three categories of language use:

1. Expressive

All language development begins orally and, in its most intimate and natural form, is sometimes referred to as expressive language. Basic to all language development, expressive language is rambling, personal, and hesitant. It is not synonymous with "creative" in the sense of "creative writing." It is an immediate vehicle for thought, for sorting out and expressing ideas, and for communicating with close friends and others. Most important, it is the means by which experience is internalized; thus, it is the language of learning. At the elementary level, abundant opportunity must be provided for children to use language that functions in this manner. Only in this way can children experience a growth in language that will come to include transactional and poetic, or formal, language uses.

Examples:

- highly personal and egocentric stories of young children
- journal or diary entries of older children

> I went to the circus. We all had ice-cream. It was a very hot day and I had a chocolate one. I saw bears and elephants. They were funny.
>
> Jenny, Age 7.

2. Transactional

Transactional language is impersonal and structured. It is used to give and seek information, to regulate and alter the behavior of others, to get something done. It is the language used by a person in the role of a participant, that is, in conveying factual information to others. As such, it is governed by the practical need of achieving a definite purpose. As important as this language function is, it must never be substituted for, or allowed to pre-empt, expressive language as the primary language of learning. Neither should it exclude explorations of the poetic functions of language.

Examples:

- most workbook activities
- recording, as in science and social studies; eye-witness accounts
- giving directions for games, recipes, activities
- reporting, as in science and social studies, about particular events or places
- generalized narrative; e.g., What I Do on Weekends
- inquiring, using letters
- regulating and persuading, as with rules, petitions, editorials, reviews, interviews, etc.
- arguing about theories, using facts and logical argumentation

3. Poetic

Poetic language, as understood here, does not mean simply the language of poetry. Poetic language can be described as more formally planned or patterned than expressive language and more imaginative than transactional language. In this sense, poetic language means language that has been consciously shaped or sculptured; it is sometimes described as "polished." A story, for example, is told in poetic language when the storyteller warms to an audience and attempts to shape the story in a satisfying way. The storyteller performs or presents the story to an audience of interested listeners. A person using poetic language examines and describes an event from some distance rather than in the midst of the experience; the speaker or writer is thus said to be in the role of a spectator. Poetic language is speculative, since the user reflects and speculates on the event or experience while describing it.

Examples:

- stories
- poetry
- play scripts
- a shaped autobiographic episode

Most of us are perhaps not especially conscious of the ways in which language is actually used in life and have thought little about its functions in school, except to try to improve it. But language, like most other human behavior, will only develop through use, and that use should include ample opportunities for children to explore more and more sensitive and subtle forms of language. This is so important that it cannot be stressed enough.

Because of their institutional nature and the way in which they have traditionally viewed the teaching function, schools generally have tended to over-emphasize transactional language, to the detriment, if not the total exclusion, of other language forms. For example, teacher-talk that seeks to suggest, inform, clarify, formulate, direct, enthuse or reinforce is all transactional in function. Classrooms dominated by teacher-talk of this kind allow little or no time for expressive language or child-child, child-teacher interaction. Equally, little time would be available for activities, such as role-playing, improvising and play-making, that tend to encourage the poetic function of language.

At the elementary level, most writing will be expressive in nature, some will be transactional, and some poetic. The balance of these three aspects will vary according to the age and ability of the children.

CHILDREN'S WRITING DEVELOPMENT

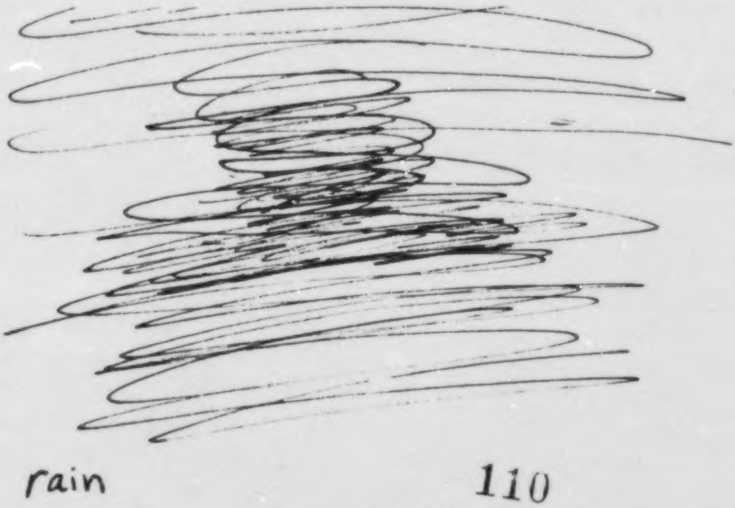
The introduction of the written code must be undertaken in such a way that children perceive writing as a natural extension of their oral language experiences. A young child comes to school able to communicate in many ways, through scribbling, speech, drawing, movement, modelling and painting. He has begun his journey towards independent writing long before entering school.

From Drawing to Composition

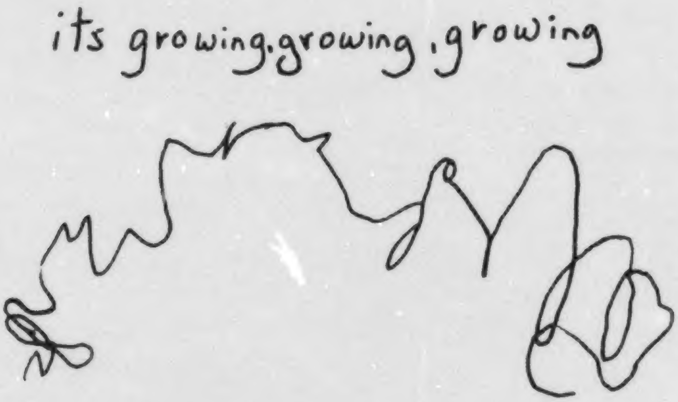
Art is the basis of all education. (Plato)

For the very young child, scribbling is an appropriate medium for expressing sensory response to words and thoughts. Drawing is perceived as writing, since the curves and lines communicate a message, which is understood by the child.

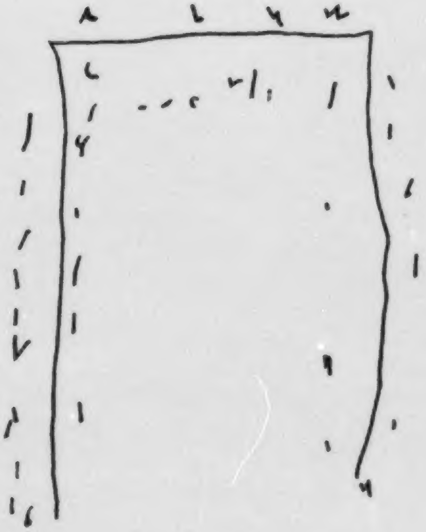
Scribblings are the first written symbolic representations of a young child's thoughts. Scribbling, drawing and writing are much the same. Scribblings are first given a label.



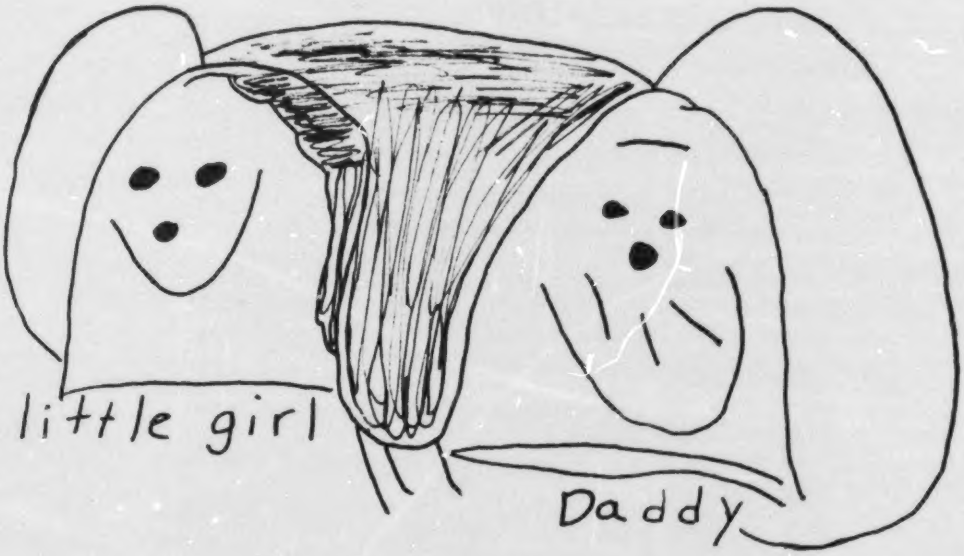
Scribblings become representations of descriptions.



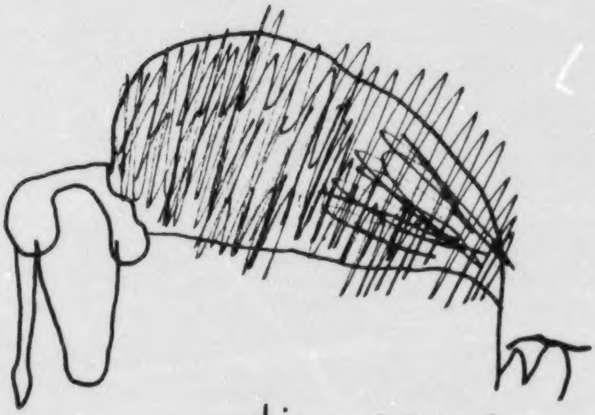
Scribblings develop into drawings where lines are clearly developed into a "something" that can be recognized by the drawer as well as by others.

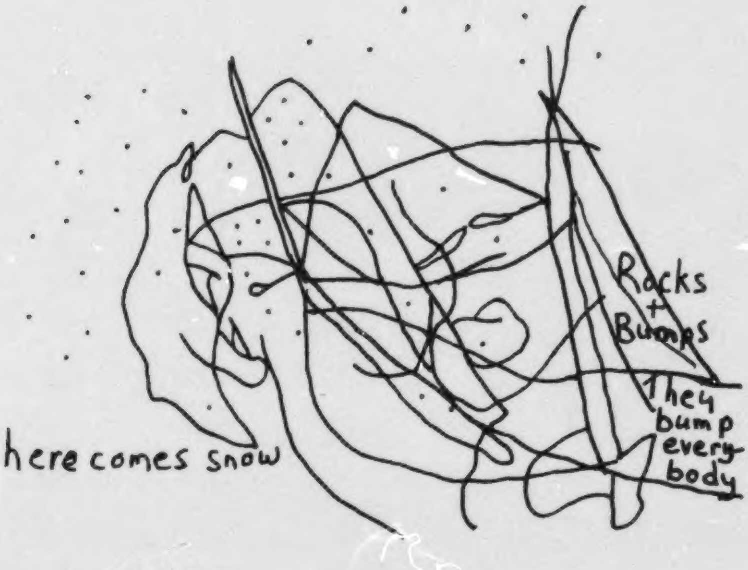


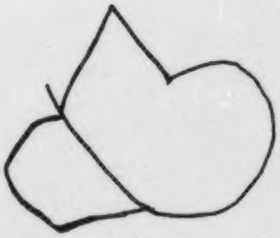
"Walk on the Sidewalk"
The dots were made as he labelled the drawing, "Walk on the Sidewalk."


little girl
Daddy

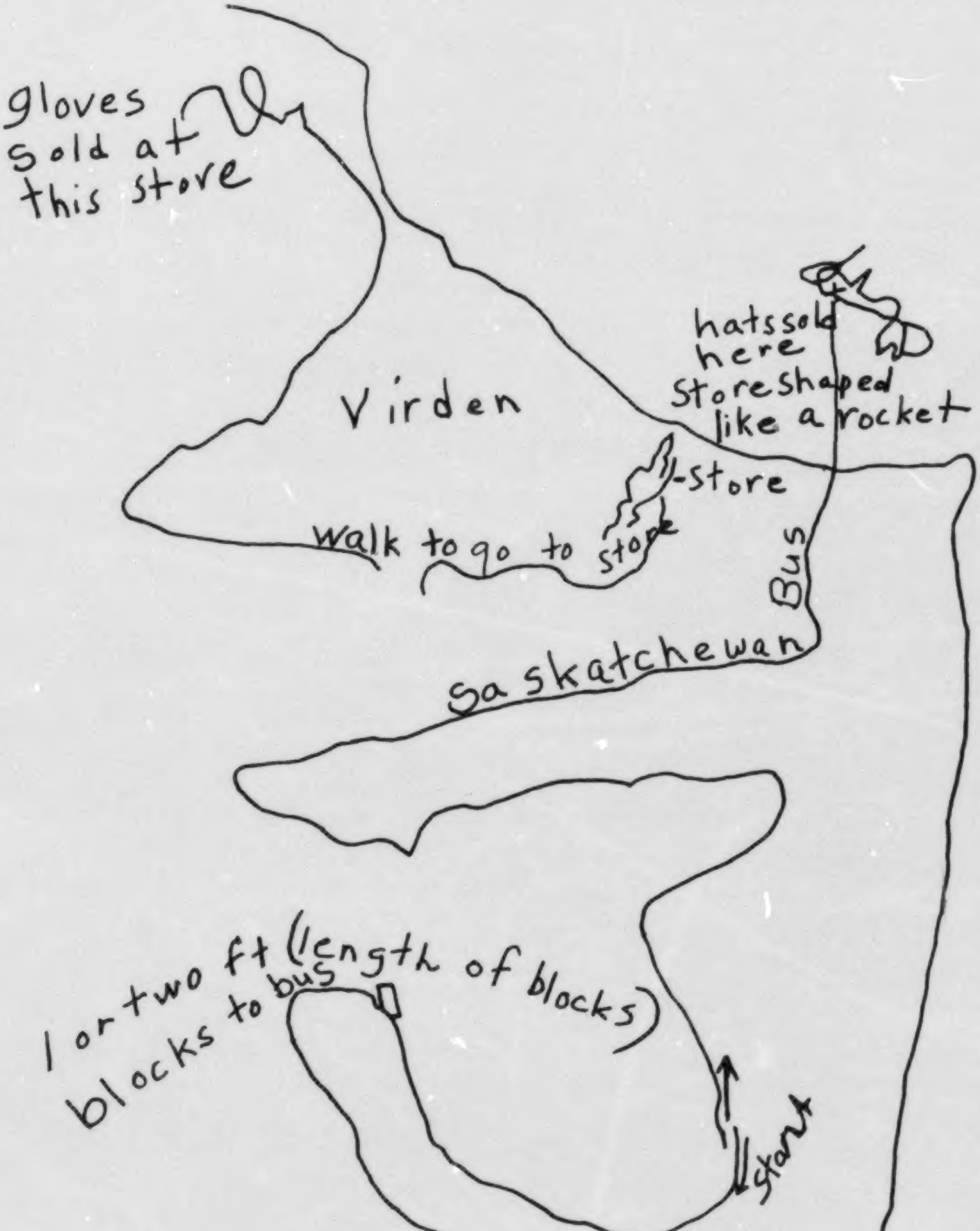
Daddy's 30 and the little girl is two-and-one-half.



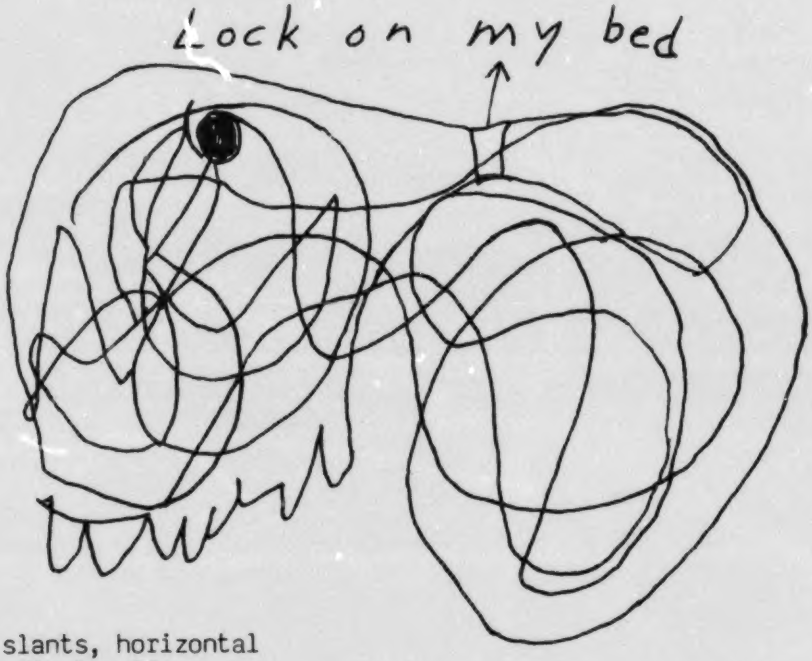

here comes snow
Rocks
+
Bumps
They
bump
every
body



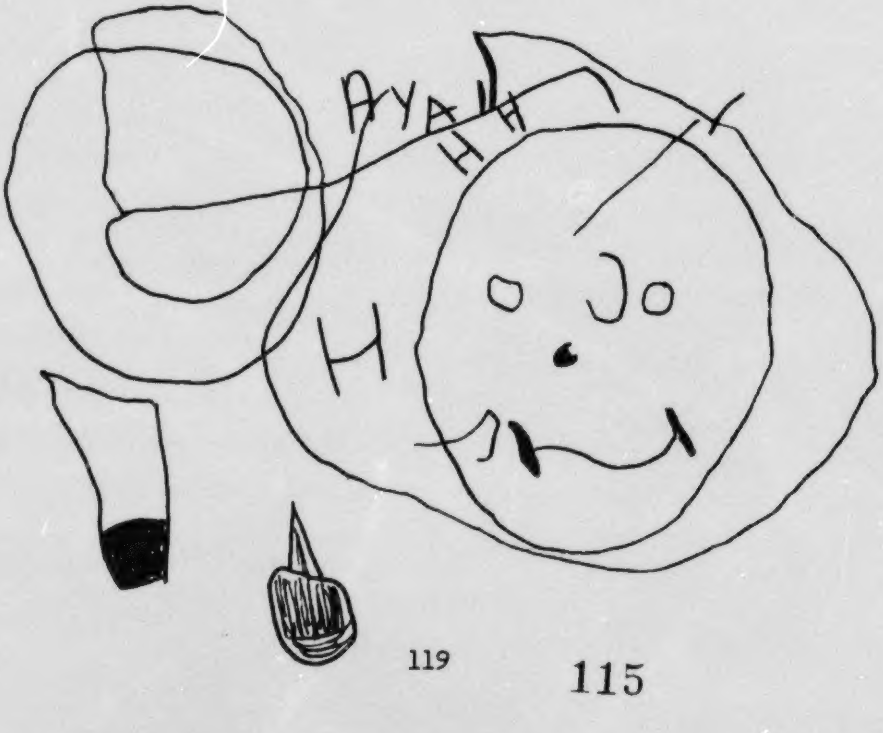
a man
wearing
a hat
when he
going to work

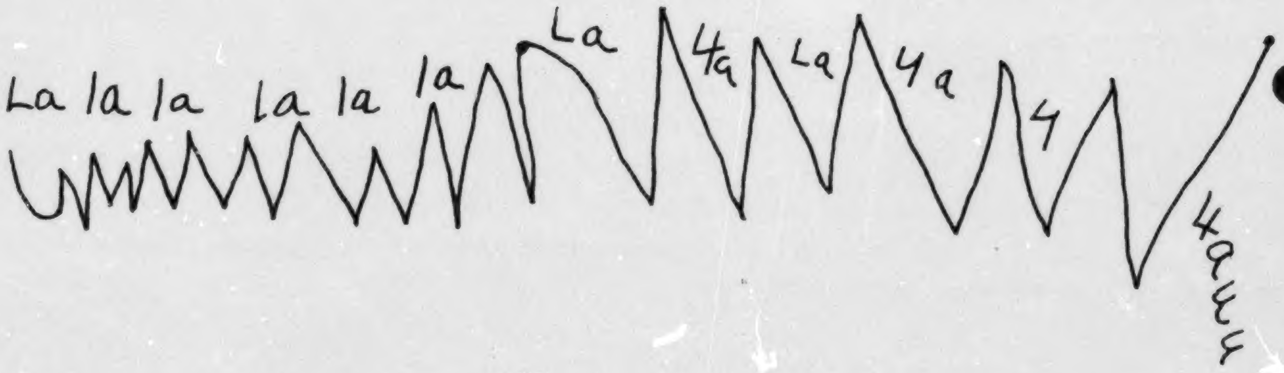

gloves sold at this store
hatssold here
Storeshaped like a rocket
Virden
-store
walk to go to store
Bus
Saskatchewan
1 or two ft (length of blocks)
blocks to bus
start
Path to get to bus

An analogy between drawing and writing is found in the evidence that during the drawing processes throughout the early years, children learn to make all shapes used in the writing process--circles, slants, triangles, squares--and vertical and horizontal lines. Furthermore, they use all shapes and lines in combinations.



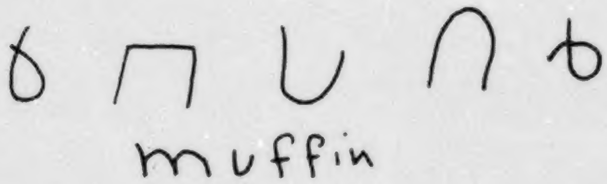
Circles, slants, horizontal and perpendicular lines, and a name for the completed shape.




La la la la la la La 4a La 4a 4 4a44

A four-year-old wrote a song and then sang it with the symbols "La la la."

Finally children begin to combine letters and letter-like shapes with their drawings.



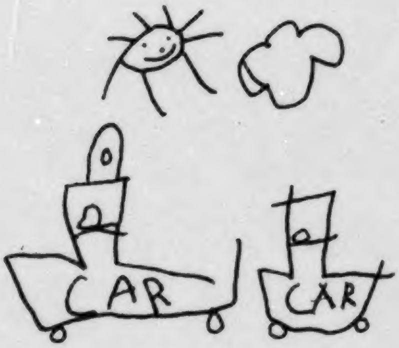
(Dora's letters and symbols.)

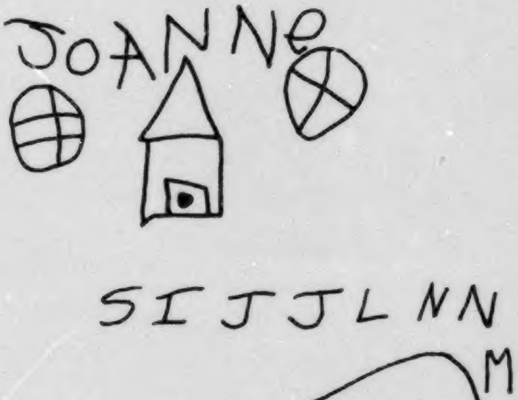
Each time Dora made a set of symbols, she named them. The number and size of the symbols and the spacing between seemed to reflect the length of the word "muffin."

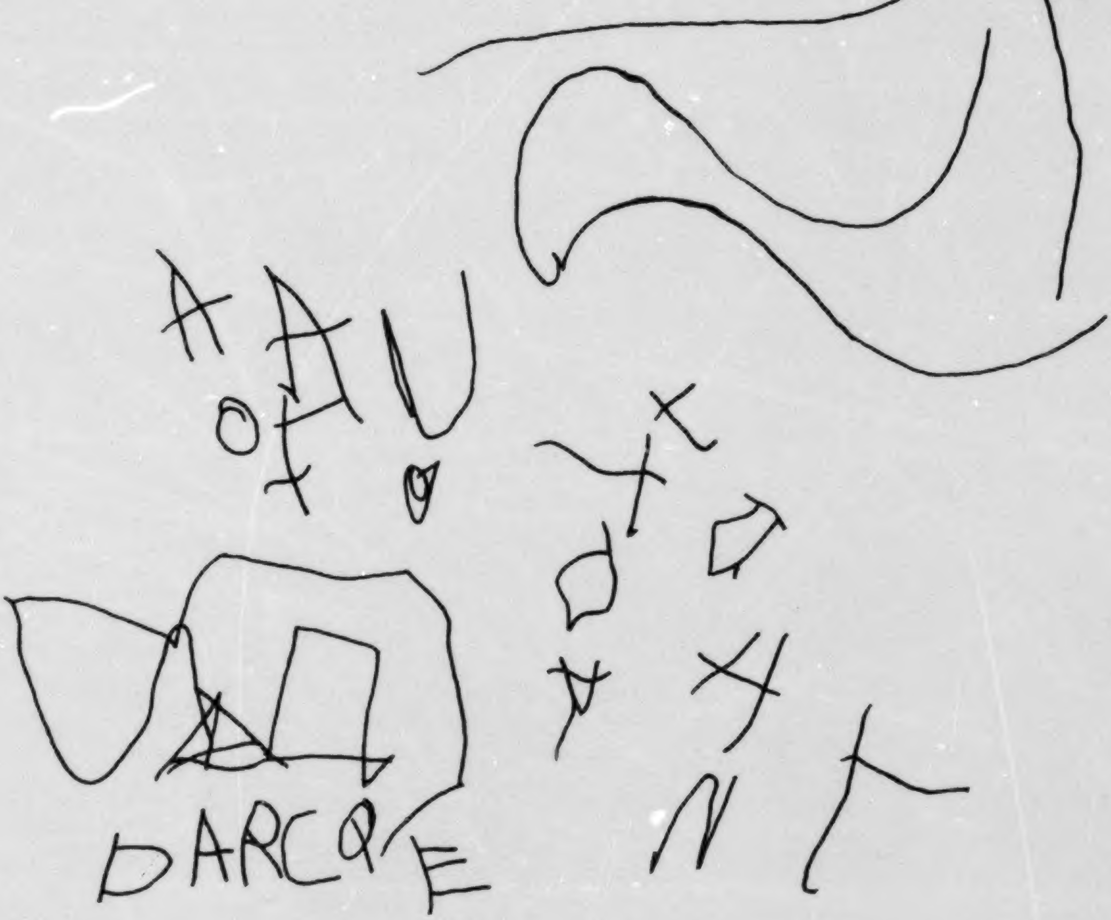
Children begin to play with writing in the same way as they play with reading; producing writing-like scribble, the principle feature of which is that, for them, it carries a message.

The Progressive Exploration of Writing

Children learn to write their names and explore creating letters and letter-like symbols with a variety of writing devices.




JOANNE
SIJJLNN
M

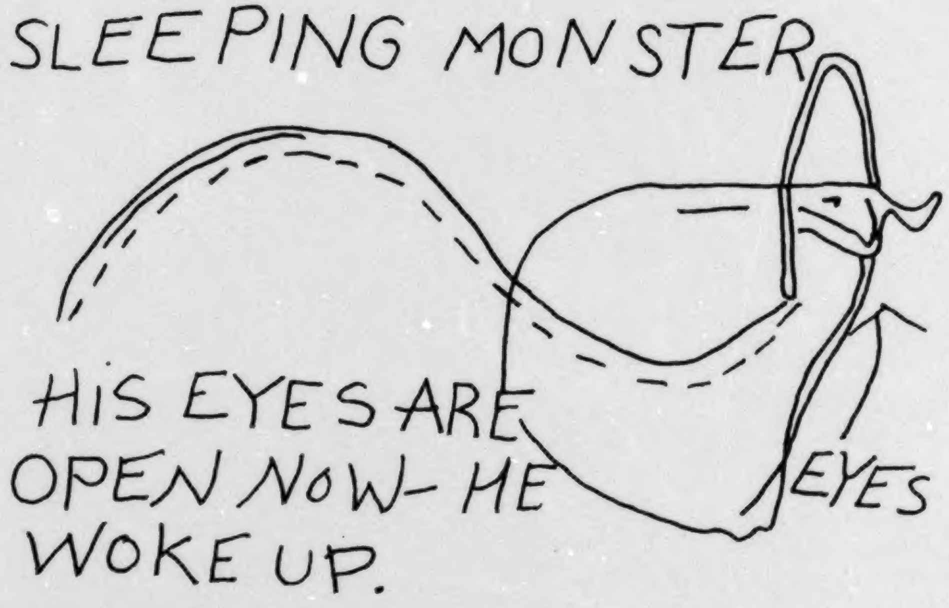


By the time children enter school, they generally know the alphabet and are able to recognize and name the letters, both in upper and lower case.

Bonnie, Bonnie
In the tub
Bonnie's mother
forgot the plug
Oh my goodness
Oh my soul
there goes Bonnie
down the hole!

Children enter school speaking and hearing a system of sounds. They recognize symbols and words and can produce letter-like forms, and perhaps some letters. They are ready to write in some manner, either by scribbling, or drawing letters or letter-like forms. Whatever form children use, opportunities for writing should be encouraged and expanded by classroom teachers.

One way to encourage children to use their scribbling as written symbols is to draw with them or demonstrate a model for them to copy; e.g., a line. See the following example; the dotted line was made by the teacher.


SLEEPING MONSTER
HIS EYES ARE OPEN NOW- HE WOKE UP.
EYES

Teachers should recognize that many children enter school with the urge to explore the mysteries of sound, print, writing, spelling, and reading. They should help children to regulate their own development. There is no need to divide listening, talking, thinking, writing and reading into separate compartments and time segments.

Read (1971, 1973), Chomsky (1971), and Clay (1975) have found that, during spontaneous writing, the children's development was essentially self-regulated, and the spelling principles were largely generated from their knowledge of the names of letters.

Example: From a four-year-old child's get well message:

2 DADDY I EM SRY U R SIC NED LUV
DADDY

Example: five-year-old:

DER MUMMY I HOP YOO OR FEELIG BEDR
I AM MKIG THS PRESIM FOOR YOU
BI DIANE

These writings are to be valued, and appear to be an indication that some children may be able to write before they can read. A child writes what he can in the way he can. Adults often can read what he writes.

Example:

the . mn.giv.the.
boy . a. flr. at.
frst. he. tok. to.
god. keir. of.it.

Josop-had-nthng
to-d-ol-He-had-jogk
in-his-yord-wos
vry-bord
sp-won-day-He-tok
ol-His-Jock-to-the
Jogk Man-the-man-gav-hm
A-plnt-atfrst-He tok-to
Moch-keir-of-it-bot
Thn-He-let-the-Plnt-gro.

(Typed from a five-year-old's writing. Notice that the spaces between words are filled in with dots and dashes.)

Read (1971) found that, among "original" spellers, those children who had begun to spell before they began to read predominated by approximately a three-to-one margin.

Clark reported from a study of thirty-two Glasgow children, who read before five years of age, that:

> Already, before four years of age, ten of the children were also interested in writing. Some began by copying words, others letters, a few wrote their names or little messages while one wrote the football scores. (Clark, 1978, pp. 51-2)

It seems that it is easier to go from sound to print than from print to sound (Clay, 1975). The children who wrote the two get-well messages heard sounds, wrote them, and then read them. Such behavior often occurs until children are encouraged to focus on the lexical spelling of words, while they are in the process of spontaneous writing.

This is not to say that children will continue to spell sounds as they hear them instead of using the lexical spelling. Rather, if they are allowed and encouraged to write, they will become self-regulators of their writing and spelling. Consider the child who first wrote "walkt" (walked). Later in his development, he wrote "walk.d" to indicate an ending for the past tense of "walk." Still later he wrote "walked."

Children have a natural desire to write. The idea of writing as a means of communication interests even the youngest child. In their writing, children want:

1. to explore self and all its meaning; children are concerned with the expression and exploration of feelings, thoughts and motives.

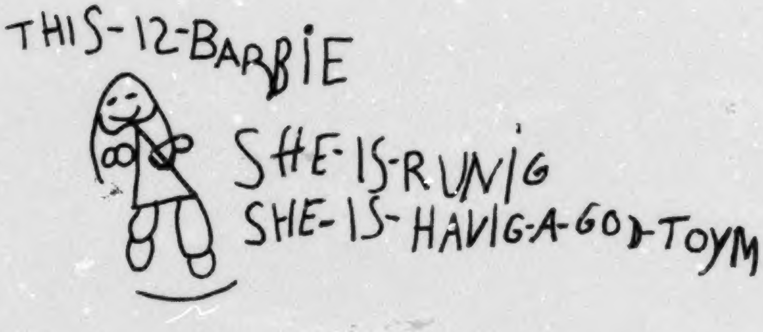
2. to say something memorable; the child's imagination is stimulated by the thought that he may write something and somebody else will be able to read it.

The major task facing the teacher is to create an atmosphere that will provide each child with the level of support needed to fulfill the natural desire to write.

All children need experiences to write about. Even at the beginning stage, some children will need only the freedom to write about such experiences. Other children will require assistance through models, frames, and the opportunity to dictate. The following examples of children's writing illustrate a variety of writing situations.

1. These children have chosen both the experience and the form.

Example 1:


THIS-12-BARBIE
SHE-IS-RUNIG
SHE-IS-HAVIG-A-GOD-TOYM

Example 2:

SNOW

I like snow,

I love snow

I like to play

I like to slide too.

In pretty snow,

Bright snow,

White snow,

Soft snow.

Age 8

Example 3:

One day while we were living in the wood, Linda and White Deer went to town, and my mother and father were across the lake. Because I was the oldest, I was left in charge of three kids and a nine-month-old baby.

For a while the kids played in the loft, until they said it was too cold. When they came down they started to make a racket so I told them to be quiet. When I said this, they said they were cold. I looked in the stove and saw it had burned down to coals. I had never built a fire in my whole life, but I knew I had to do it because by that time I was getting a bit cold too. So I stirred up the coals and put in the kindling. Then I added some larger wood and some splits and opened the damper.

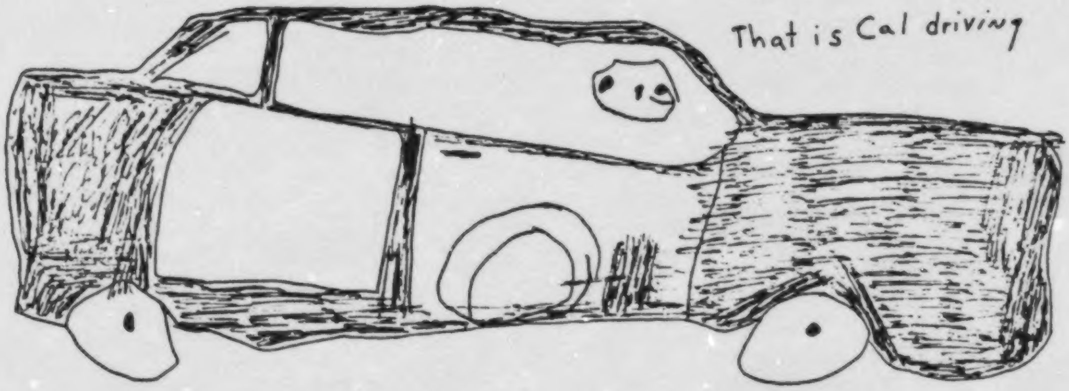
When my parents came home to a warm house they were very proud of me.

Age 9

2. The teacher has provided the specific experience, but the children have chosen the form.

Example 1:

The teacher has provided a climbing apparatus on which this child played "Dukes of Hazard." He was fascinated by the cars, and the climbing apparatus gave him the opportunity to pretend the climber was a car. The following composition was stimulated by his environment.



This is the duke boys car

That is Cal driving

Cal is doing a Evelknevil jump.

Example 2:

The following poem was written after the child had taken part in an art activity in which paper maché was used to make animals.

GIRAFFES AT SCHOOL

Giraffes are tall
And some are small
Only when they're babies.
But if they get a
Contagious disease
It's likely to be rabies.
We made some giraffes
Here at school.
We made some look hot.
We made some look cool.
We made some wrong.
We made some right.
One wouldn't stand up
So we gave it a cane.

Age 8

Example 3:

The following was written by a child during free writing, after viewing a video tape of himself playing in a teacher-planned activity centre.

THE TUESDAY THAT I'LL NEVER FORGET

It was Tuesday, an exciting and embarrassing time. It was sort of fun, until I saw the film!

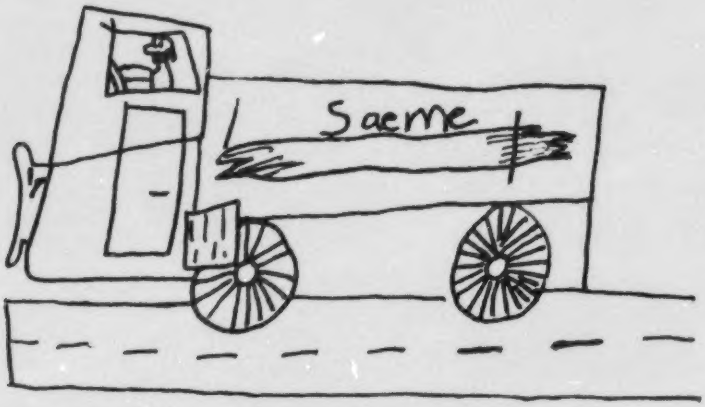
Well anyway I really do not want to say much more about myself but I guess I will. So here goes, I made a fool of myself by acting stupid!

And I'm not telling you why I felt that way because I don't want you to have a heart attack by laughing.

3. These children have chosen the experience, and the teacher has provided the form.

   a. Partial sentence frame

      When I grow up I want to be a
      saeme driver because I will deliver
      things. and my mom and my sister
      and me will be a saeme driver.



   b. Model (poem, story)

      (Poem patterned on "In January," by Maurice Sendack, 1962)

WINTER

In winter I really like to ski
Out on the hills I will be
Drinking chicken soup with rice
Drinking once, drinking twice
Drinking chicken soup with rice.

Age 7

(Story patterned on "Country Mouse and City Mouse.")

TWO HAMSTERS

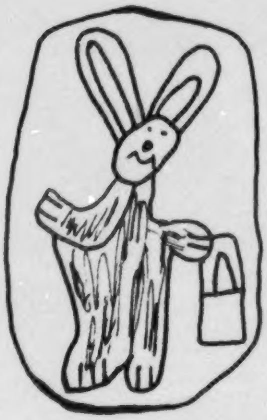
Once there were two little hamsters. The female was brown and the male was white. They met in a field face to face and the male followed the female into the meadow. And when they got to the gate they went under it.

The female and the male made their home in a grassy spot by the barn. The male found an old mouse hole where they would have their babies in the spring. But now it was time to make their nest for the winter. When they got their nest built they hunted for food and stored it for winter.

Age 8

4. These children have chosen the experience, and the teacher assists with the oral expression and acts as a scribe.

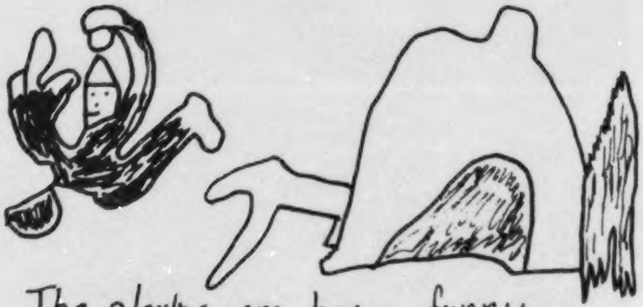
   a. Labelling



My Easter Bunny

Age 6

   b. Sentences



The clowns are being funny

Age 7

c. Story

Age 8

On an asphalt street on our bay,
Van Horn Place, Garden worm is
just a baby, one month old. He
was curling up eating a little bug.
They have to curl up to choke the
thing they are eating before they eat
it. Joey was taking care of the worm.
I also had to take care of five frogs
last year. If I were the worm I would
scram. If there was a hole nearby,
I would slither into it.

5. The teacher has provided the experience, acts as scribe, and guides the form. In this category are the chart stories that form an important part of most primary language arts programs.

Chart Stories

Steps in Building Chart Stories (Group Writing)

1. an experience shared by pupils and teacher
2. discussion of the experience
    - to exchange information
    - to develop ideas in relation to the experience
3. oral organization and selection of ideas
4. dictation by pupils while teacher records
5. editing may follow as children grow confident in written expression

Example 1

The experience that prompted the following story was planting bean seeds in a grade one classroom in September.

Random ideas were expressed as the children discussed the event.

- Bean seeds are brown with white spots.
- We wet one seed.
- I got my hands muddy.
- Joey spilled the water.
- We filled our cups with soil.

The teacher guided the story by asking specific questions:

- What did we do first before planting our seeds?
- Were both seeds the same? Why not?
- Then what did we do?

The following story resulted:

OUR BEAN PLANTS

> We put soil into two glasses. Then we put in two bean seeds. One seed was wet and the other was dry. We wanted to see if the wet or dry seed would grow faster. Then we watered the seeds and put the glasses by the window.

The objectives of the teacher's questions are not to control the children's thinking but to help them think about the experience in its entirety, in a natural sequence, and to establish the differences between oral and written form. Thus, children learn from the beginning that writing is more than simply talk written down. It is an organized kind of talk that is less repetitive than conversation and more selective in ideas.

As the children gain confidence in their ability to express thoughts in written form, the teacher can introduce the idea of refining and revising written work. Pupils should realize a first draft is rarely a polished product and improvement comes with effort and thought. No single composition should be subjected to so much change that it can no longer be recognized. Rather, individual sentences can be expanded, deleted, or refined to give a more precise expression. All revisions should be suggested by the children.

Example 2

This chart story was written by a primary class following a trip to the zoo in June.

Rough draft

> Yesterday our class went to the zoo. We went on the school bus. There were lots of things to see. The Koala bear was sitting in the branch of a tree. The lion was sleeping when we went by. We had a picnic lunch. It was a nice day. We had lots of fun.

Two types of revisions were made here:

1. Sentence expansion by combining short sentences.

   Yesterday our class went to the zoo on the school bus. It was a nice day so we had a picnic lunch.

2. Use of more precise words.

   "There were lots of things to see," could be said in a more precise way. The children suggested: "many unusual animals," "interesting animals from far away," "exciting animals from all over the world."

Revised story

> Yesterday our class went to the zoo on the school bus. It was a nice day so we had a picnic lunch. There were exciting animals from all over the world. The lion was sleeping when we went by. The Koala bear was sitting in the branch of a tree. We had lots of fun.

Such extensive revision should not be part of every composition, but neither should the teacher shy away from careful and demanding improvement. Children need to:

- develop criteria for quality in writing
- develop pride in work well done

Example 3

This chart story was written by a group of grade three children to summarize the steps followed in making candy.

MAKING CANDY

1. Melt 1/4 cup butter
2. Add 1 cup brown sugar
3. Cook until bubbling
4. Add 1/2 cup cocoa
5. Stir until smooth
6. Pour in 1 teaspoon vanilla
7. Add 1/4 cup chopped walnuts
8. Pour into pan
9. Cool until firm

Example 4

This chart was a group writing project by a grade four class, following a discussion of the accident of Humpty-Dumpty. The children had viewed accident reports in local newspapers to learn about format, style and techniques of reporting, and patterned their writing on these newspaper accounts. The following report is their edited version.

MAN FALLS FROM 20-FOOT WALL

> An accident victim lay helpless on the ground for almost two hours with a broken hip, a fractured skull, and undetermined internal injuries after a fall from a wall twenty feet high.
>
> Sir John James, one of the King's men, said in an interview that Humpty Dumpty had climbed the wall in an attempt to oversee neighborhood activities.
>
> While he was showing off and stretching to see what he could see, his feet slipped and he fell to the ground leaving him shattered and helpless.
>
> The King's horses and his men were called to the scene, but despite all attempts to put him together, Dumpty died at the scene of the accident.

Example 5

The following story was written by a grade four group. They had a common experience from which their writing originated. They brainstormed for ideas, categorized them using the 5W structure (who, what, where, when, why), and then devised a paragraph. The group edited.

> On Friday, June 12th, the gym at La Verendrye School was colorful and crowded. It was decorated for a Mini-Folklorama which was about the different countries we had studied in Social Studies. All the grade four students in Portage made a display of the countries they had chosen. In the Indian display they had slides, and in the Australian one there was a tape-recording of songs and information. There were models, samples of writing, special foods and even an exhibition of karate in the Japanese section. In some displays, people wore traditional costumes. One lady and her son were dressed in Ukrainian costume and were decorating Easter eggs.
>
> The day before the Folklorama all the grade four's were given passports which contained questions about all of the countries. We had to go around and find the answers. At the end, the groups exchanged foods from the countries. Then, because we were the hosts, we were the last to leave. We hope we can do the same next year.

The students were then encouraged to write their own stories, with personal impressions of favorite displays.

Learning Outcomes

The pupils should develop an understanding of:

1. the nature of written composition:
   - Written, unlike oral, expression must provide its own context; e.g., "It is brown" has no meaning in written form, but "the dog is brown" provides the necessary context.
   - Ideas must be refined and selected during the discussion.
   - Ideas must be organized and sequenced.
   - Writing provides a permanent record which can be read.

2. the conventions of written expresssion
   - left to right orientation
   - spacing
   - capitalization
   - punctuation
   - sentences
   - paragraphs
   - spelling

Note: Chart story writing is a useful technique at any level.

COMPOSITION

As children progress in the elementary school, they are involved mainly in two types of writing:

1. Personal free writing which is spontaneous and uninstructed, and includes such things as journal writing, keeping diaries, writing personal letters, notes and stories. Teachers should respect the privacy of such writings and not expect children to edit or share them unless they wish to do so.

2. Personal instructed writing which is teacher-guided, and includes writing stories, poems, paragraphs, reports, notes, directions, outlines, and summaries. Teachers provide instruction in the specific skills required for each kind of writing.

Pre-Writing

The purpose of the pre-writing time is to concentrate on exploring a wealth of ideas and selecting those that focus on the particular topic chosen for composition. Pre-writing includes everything that takes place before writing the actual composition. To help children concentrate on selecting ideas before they engage in written composition, certain motivational conditions must be created.

1. Children must have interesting and exciting experiences which elicit feelings and ideas they will wish to share. When children have such experiences, teachers should take advantage of these spontaneous situations and provide writing opportunities.

   Some children will find a subject quickly and easily. The egocentricity of young children, for example, seems to guarantee that a subject will always be close at hand. However, at other times, and especially for older children, finding something to write about may be an elusive task. Teachers should:

   - provide children with a variety of experiences involving nature, literature, and other things that can be enjoyed alone or shared with others
   - provide children with a wide range of materials to handle, to observe, to smell, to taste, to listen to and to read
   - encourage children to provide materials and activities for class stimulation

2. Children must have an accepting and encouraging classroom climate for writing to become a natural and enjoyable experience. Teachers should:

   - be receptive to the children's interests and ideas
   - have a wide range of interests to share with the children
   - provide opportunities that challenge and stimulate inquiry and discussion
   - respect individual children's writing ability and needs
   - provide children with time to discuss, to question, and to reflect on the experiences they wish to write about
   - ensure each child's writing effort is respected
   - lead children to respect each others' viewpoints

3. Children must have guidelines in expressing and extending their experiences in writing. Teachers should:

   - provide children with the time and skills for brainstorming, for discussion, and for exchange of ideas with other children
   - provide children with the time and skills for research and the gathering of any materials necessary for writing
   - encourage children to react to other people's ideas rather than to the people
   - help children develop their ideas orally by helping them select appropriate words and forms, and showing them how to organize these fluently for writing
   - help children with the structure and the mechanics of composition

Writing

The purpose of the writing time is for the children to write their thoughts and feelings down on paper. Teachers should:

- provide children with sufficient, uninterrupted time for thinking and writing

- be available to encourage individual student efforts and to respond to specific student concerns

Re-Writing

The purpose of the re-writing time is to allow children to decide whether their composition says what it is intended to say. Teachers should:

- ensure children understand that re-writing their corrected drafts is not a penalty but an integral part of the process of all writing;
- give children time to reread and edit their compositions.

Editing

Children need to learn that the purpose of editing a written composition is to make the message conveyed to others clear and precise.

There are two types of editing:

1. The child learns to edit his own thoughts and ideas. Editing provides him with the opportunity to decide whether what he has written is what he intended to say. It also gives him the opportunity to select alternative ways to convey his ideas more precisely.

2. The child learns to correct errors in mechanics, such as spelling, punctuation and capitalization, to make her written composition more presentable to others.

Children have had prior experiences with these two types of editing through their dictated stories to the teacher and through group experience charts. Later, they begin to apply these editing skills to their own writing. Oral reading of compositions is an invaluable part of proofreading. Pupils should develop confidence in their own hearing ability to monitor their written work.

Teachers should edit compositions with the children, helping them discern what they have said and what remains to be said, and teaching them to inspect their first drafts for meaning, choice of words, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation, etc. Some children will learn this fairly quickly and will write independently. Other children will need considerable teacher-help to incorporate editing as a meaningful and productive part of the writing process. Teachers may wish to proceed slowly, asking first that children improve one aspect of their draft (i.e., choice of words or spelling) before dealing with the next.

Methods of editing include:

1. teachers working with small groups of children to examine, and, where necessary, to delete, condense and revise a composition;

2. teachers working with an individual child on his composition;

3. pairs or groups of children examining each other's compositions with the help of specific guidelines; e.g., a proofreading chart;

4. individuals editing their own composition independently.

Not all students will want or need to re-write every piece of writing. They should learn to revise and develop a piece of writing they wish to present, and they should learn that such re-writing means positive improvement and progress toward the goal of effective communication.

The ultimate aim of this approach is to help children assume increasing responsibility for analyzing their own compositions and diagnosing their own problems. Having acquired the knowledge and criteria by which to evaluate their own work, they should be expected to apply it to their writing. Not only are children capable of doing this, but the results are very productive for their own writing.

Within any particular age group or grade level, will be widely varying degrees of language competence and, therefore, of writing ability. Consequently, teachers should not expect established age or grade level criteria to apply to every child. Instead, they should consider each child's stage of language development before deciding what that particular child can or cannot write.

The Importance of Mechanics

It is necessary to clarify the place of mechanics in a child's writing development. That children need to develop knowledge, understanding and use of these writing conventions, is self-evident. What is perhaps less clear is the relationship of mechanics to the writing or composing process.

Composition, or the process of composing, is distinct from writing. For this reason, teachers commonly use such terms as "oral composition" and even, on occasion, "oral literature." Composing means the selection, ordering and shaping of words and ideas for maximum effectiveness. Composing is essentially the same process for speakers and writers. Transcribing thoughts and words by means of graphic symbols is the act of writing, as distinct from that of composing. Thus, while writing is more tangible and more easily evaluated, the composing, which gives it meaning, is of first importance. Spelling and punctuation are therefore aspects of transcription. They require a different kind of learning than that needed for composing.

Consequently, conventions such as spelling and handwriting demand their own teaching time and should receive the attention they need. However, these elements should not be substituted for composing, nor should they be confused in the child's mind with the composing process itself. In composing, the conventions become important only at the editing stage and then only as a particular child or group of children seem to need help. Most of this help will be in the form of direct instructions; however, it should be stressed that younger children can learn much indirectly or inductively. Young children can be taught a great deal about the conventions of language from just observing what happens, for example, when they dictate a story, either individually or collectively, to a teacher.

Although it is possible to argue that all writing conventions ought to be taught on a grade-by-grade basis, in most cases their limited transferability to a child's writing should dictate otherwise. When teaching writing, teachers should try to relate all aspects of a child's writing to that child's level of language usage. Therefore, there is little point in teaching quotation marks to a child who is not ready to use direct speech in her writing, or in teaching paragraphing to a child who cannot progress beyond two or three rudimentary sentences in his own writing. Observant teachers must be ready to respond to a child's needs in relation to the actual piece of writing being done.

The teacher's first responsibility is to get children writing. Initially, the mechanics of writing are of secondary importance, but as the child begins to compose independently, he must see the need for spelling and handwriting, as well as punctuation, the choice of words and usage patterns, neatness and legibility as features of effective communication. However, the primary language arts program stresses maximum opportunity for children to use language rather than to analyze the language. The focus is on creation and production rather than analysis and dissection.

Helping Children Write

Since composition is a direct outcome of the child's own expressive language, it is limited by the quality and sophistication of that language. It is not appropriate, then, to teach "vocabulary" and "usage" or "grammar" in isolation. The purpose of teaching these skills is to improve expressive language at the oral, as well as the written, level. Therefore, the choice of skills taught will reflect the observed language needs of the child, rather than an externally devised list.

STRATEGIES

Vocabulary Development

Rich and varied experiences, with corresponding opportunities to discuss them, will ensure strong vocabulary development. A child in kindergarten complained that the tadpoles in the aquarium had drunk the water. Careful questioning, suggestions for verification, and eventual experiments to measure evaporation, led Stephen to an understanding of the water cycle in a very elementary way, but also added many words to his vocabulary, including "evaporation," which he was able to apply and use in a meaningful way in other contexts.

A story read to a grade four class included the word "mesmerized." Through reading the paragraph dramatically, the children were able to come up with a definition: "hypnotized." A subsequent check in the library revealed that the root of that word was the name of a scientist who had played an importent role in the development of hypnotism as a medical tool. Reference to a student, who was later observed watching a fly darting against a window, as being mesmerized by the fly's movements helped to plant the word more firmly in the students' minds. This kind of vocabulary development is very powerful.

The "find another word" technique is also very effective. Given a picture of a person or object, the students are encouraged to brainstorm as many ways of naming it as possible. Common and proper nouns can then be listed on the board or form a web of words radiating from the picture. Lists of this kind, left on the board or bulletin board, become a source of ideas for writing or a ready-made spelling list. Other word categories can be brainstormed in the same way; e.g., action words, describing words, synonyms.

It is essential to convey to the students an excitement about language, and this can be achieved only by exciting, active, oral work. Sterile vocabulary exercises will not produce a sensitivity to words; meaningless word lists will not promote more effective oral communication or more interesting writings. Having gained some facility in "finding another word" in many oral situations, the student will be prepared to write and/or edit in order to use a more precise and effective vocabulary. (See group writing section.) A good sourcebook is Words to Use: A Primary Thesaurus, by Patrick Drysdale (1971).

Language Usage

Developing an awareness of alternative sentence structures should also begin at the oral level. Expanding kernel sentences, combining simple sentences, and rearranging phrases to form the most effective sentences are learned best through innovative activities.

One ideal beginning method of developing sentence competence is described below. Large cards are prepared:

WHO? DID WHAT? HOW? WHEN? WHERE? WHY?

Students provide a "who" for the sentence (the subject), then a "did what" (the predicate). Words or phrases are added to the "did what," telling how, where, when, and why. The students could be encouraged to find a better word or phrase, thus helping to build vocabulary. When the sentence is complete, the phrases can be rearranged.

WHEN?	WHY?	WHO?	DID WHAT?	HOW?	WHERE?
After supper,	because he had nothing to do	the monkey	swung	crazily	in his cage.

The students decide which sounds the best, which arrangement changes the meaning, and which does not make sense. As they have more practice with this method of developing sentences, the students become more creative in their choice of words and phrases.

By eliminating phrases from the line-up and repeating the remaining words, the students themselves come to realize that sentences must have a "who" and "did what" in order to make sense.

Expansion of the "who," by adding descriptive words and phrases, should also be explored. Encourage the students to try adjectives or adjectival phrases in different positions to form the most effective sentence.

The more practice students have with the technique of sentence expansion at the oral level, the more successful will be the transfer to written language. It gives the students an insight into how language works and how it can be made to work better. It may also be applied later to editing their own writen work.

Some young students use long, rambling sentences which contain many thoughts. They need oral practice to hear the division of thought content, necessary for one sentence. Other students use short, stilted sentences to express themselves. Both groups can benefit from practice in combining sentences effectively. Group writing provides an opportunity for teaching sentence combining.

Grammar exercises in which the students are asked to underline nouns, verbs, etc., do nothing toward improving writing skills and, therefore, have no place in an early years language program. There are alternative methods of teaching grammar to develop syntactic maturity, such as sentence expansion games, good discussion, re-writing of notes, collaborative revision of compositions, playing with one sentence discourses and verbalizing certain cognitive tasks (see Moffett 1968, p. 155-87).

Punctuation

Punctuation is an auditory skill! The purpose of punctuation is to inform the reader how to say the sentence. For example, there is a world of difference between "Go home!" and "Go home?" The students must learn to listen to others and decide whether they are telling, asking, commanding, or getting excited about something. Once the students' auditory skills have been developed in this way, they should be able to identify the different kinds of sentences and supply oral examples. It is a simple step from this oral identification to learning the punctuation and capitalization rules of a telling sentence that begins with a capital letter and ends with an exclamation mark; an asking sentence that begins with a capital letter and ends with a question mark; a commanding sentence that begins with a capital letter and ends with an exclamation mark; and an exciting sentence that begins with a capital letter, and ends with an exclamation mark. Examples can be found in stories, and, using the skills developed orally, the students should read them aloud to the group. The classification of sentences into the various categories, and graphing the frequency of their occurrence, etc., are activities which will give meaningful practice.

In editing written work with the student, the teacher now has a structure to use. "Can you hear a question mark?" "Is that sentence telling you something?" "What does a telling/ asking/ commanding/ exciting sentence always have?" is more meaningful to the student than to be asked to punctuate a page of sentences devised by someone else. When student partners are editing each other's work, this practiced method of punctuation is invaluable. Oral editing, that is, reading aloud, becomes a must at this point so that the punctuation can be heard!

Activities which involve changing punctuation marks on signs or in newspaper headlines, and thus changing the meaning, are very useful. For example, ask the students to read the sign:

PRIVATE
NO SWIMMING
ALLOWED

and then insert the punctuation marks.

PRIVATE?
NO! SWIMMING
ALLOWED.

The necessity for correct punctuation is thus displayed graphically.

Commas used in listings are very easily taught if treated as oral punctuation, and if students are encouraged to proofread aloud and listen for them. Listening for commas in sentence expansion work is also a firm foundation for written work.

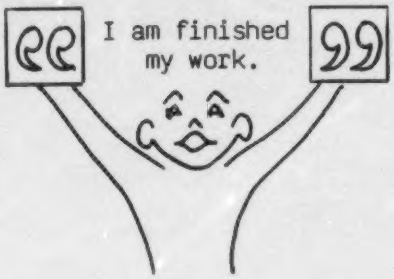
Apostrophes should not be taught in isolation. Students encounter them very early in reading, whether in contractions or possessives. These are already part of their oral vocabularies, so the written form should be taught in this context.

One method of introducing apostrophes is by using pictures as motivators. Students should use different phrases to describe the same picture; e.g., the boy's ball, John's favorite toy; the girl's coat, Mary's coat, Betty's jacket, etc. However, the teacher must remember that teaching apostrophes, as with all written language mechanics, must be done as a direct result of errors in written language. Discussion of the rule as the need arises, some meaningful practice, and encouragement to correct their own errors in the proofreading and editing stages of writing, will be more meaningful and better assimilated into the students' language development.

Quotation marks should also be taught as the need arises. As with the apostrophe, quotation marks will have been encountered in reading long before students are ready to use them in written language. Young children tend to report speech (use indirect quotations) rather than use direct speech.

Drama is an excellent way to introduce the possibility of inserting direct quotations into written language. Students could be encouraged to write scripts after an improvisation. This can lead into story writing based on the drama, which will include some dialogue and, therefore, direct quotations, requiring quotation marks. (This is also ideal for introducing alternatives to the word "said": "How did so-and-so say it?")

As always, oral work should form the basis for learning punctuation skills. Designate students to be a speaker and a reporter, with the speaker saying, "said so-and-so." For example, the speaker says: "I am finished my work" while holding up a set of quotation marks in each hand. The reporter, standing next to the speaker, then says, "said Billy."


“
I am finished my work.
”

said Billy.

The reporter can change his position, appearing before and then in the middle of what the speaker is saying.

“ Do you think I could go with them? ” asked Mary.

Mary asked, “ Do you think I could go with them? ”

“ Do you think, ” Mary asked, “ I could go with them? ”

The need for a second set of quotation marks in a split quotation, as well as the punctuation mark within the quotation mark, should be arrived at inductively before the rule is formulated.

These skills should be taught in small groups to those students using them incorrectly in written work rather than in a class grammar lesson. In this way, the skills will be taught as a means to an end--the improvement of writing skills--rather than as an end in themselves.

> A sound knowledge of less is a surer foundation than confusion over much.
>
> Pooley, 1946, p. 5

SAMPLE STORIES

The following writing samples are taken from a grade three classroom. They demonstrate the range of ability often present in a group of children of approximately the same age. The attached comments attempt to evaluate the writing and suggest teacher follow-up.

Example 1:

The Circus

The elaf____ Were Big
the Bear Bit the man
in The leg The man
ran after him. I
had pop corn

Comments

This child can visualize scenes that happened at the circus, although he does not yet elaborate on his basic ideas in his writing. His spelling is accurate, and he has developed an effective strategy to deal with words he is unable to spell. He shows an understanding of simple sentences, although he needs help with punctuation and with extending his ideas.

The teacher could continue to ask him about experiences important to him and continue to record important words, phrases and ideas for him to use in his writing. The teacher could also help this child in developing a story by giving him plenty of oral language experiences to build on (e.g., improvising, puppet plays, narrating). The teacher could ask the child to read his compositions orally to learn the effectiveness of punctuation. The teacher should, however, continue to accept the child's compositions and appreciate whatever progress occurs.

Example 2: We went to the circus one day. Ther was a baer doing funny triks. The baer was riding bik very fast. Them the man want to stop him. The baer jumped over a bag. Then he ran under the stares. Then the man get the elefents to do triks. Get up Get up and he run after the elefents. That was funny. The elefents were holding the tails and climbing on the little chaers. The blankets were red one fell down and the baby elefent sat down on it and the man coudn not get him off. I laught.

Comments

This child has observed many details which he describes in his composition. He manages to narrate his experiences in a sequential way and conveys excitement and a sense of humor that brings life to his story. His sense of action, his ability to describe one thing at a time, and his attempt to integrate dialogue, show that he is ready to learn more about alternate word usage, sentence structure, and punctuation. Although his spelling is unconventional, it is phonetic and, therefore, readable.

With help from the teacher this child could well be on his way to becoming an interesting writer. He would benefit from oral proofreading, from practice in sentence combining, and from help in recognizing that all words are not phonetically spelled.

Example 3:

The Clowns

In the middle of
the curcus some
clowns came out of
a car. They were
washing their
clothes. Then they
started to have a
water fight! They
were splashing water
on each other and got
each other all wet.
They started to
chase each other and
one clown lost her
wig. She quickly ran
off stage and every
body clapped their
hand's and cheered

Comments

This is a well-developed composition for an eight-year-old. The child who wrote it exhibits few problems with mechanics.

This child has mastered the use of simple sentences which focus on and expand the opening theme sentence. She uses statements to describe the sequence of events. She displays an appreciation for the humor of a situation.

It would seem that this writer is now ready for more complex sentences to add depth to her basic story and to make further use of vocabulary. This composition also offers an opportunity to use dialogue. It would help if this child could become involved in acting out her story, and then write the accompanying script.

EVALUATION

One essential factor influencing the development of writing competence is evaluation. Evaluation is valuable only to the extent that it helps the pupil improve her or his ability to write. It is not an end in itself. Evaluation should involve both teacher and pupil and should be based on numerous samples of the child's written work. These samples should be collected on a regular basis and retained in a folder or notebook.

The Teacher's Role

The teacher's role should be that of an advisor who works with the children to help them make better decisions about their writing. Through sharing in the evaluation, the teacher can guide the children in critically assessing their compositions in terms of ideas and content first, and then in terms of structure and mechanics.

A teacher also needs information about the children's way of thinking, the range of their interests, and the progress in the quality of their writing, so that expectations and teaching strategies can be adjusted to meet the needs of individual children. The pupil-teacher conference is one way in which this can be accomplished.

Sometimes evaluation scales are useful to a teacher in judging pupil progress in writing. Two such scales are: N.W. Sunbye's "Evaluation of Children's Composition Scale" (N.C.T.E.), and the Manitoba Writing Assessment Program's "Holistic Marking Scale and Descriptive Marking Scale" (Manitoba Department of Education).

The Pupil's Role

Even though the teacher acts as an advisor, the student remains in control of his writing during the evaluation stage. The child can select his own writing efforts for evaluation. He can talk about aspects of his own writing and learn the criteria for evaluation. He can see this progress in his own writing and be involved in plans for further development.

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SPELLING

INTRODUCTION

Spelling is a communication skill, essential for correct expression of ideas in writing. Like punctuation and mechanics, it is only a part of the total writing process. Confidence in spelling facilitates written expression. The ability to spell is dependent upon attitudes, habits, and skills which are best developed in an atmosphere of plentiful and continuous experience in writing and reading. Good spelling is more the result of a classroom climate in which pupils have the desire to communicate effectively, than it is the result of the isolated spelling lesson.

Spelling is more than memorizing a list of words. The real growth of spelling comes through composition.

The major goal of the early years spelling program is to develop in children the habit of independence in expressive writing.

Specific Objectives

Teachers should encourage children to develop:

- a clear, correct pronunciation of the words they use
- the ability to spell words they need in their basic writing activities
- a knowledge of how to locate words for spelling
- appropriate methods of learning to spell
- an understanding of patterns of words
- proofreading skills
- an awareness of the importance of accurate spelling and a concern about spelling in written expression

Time Allocation

According to research (Horn, 1960; Thomas, 1979), the direct study of spelling words should not consume more than fifteen minutes a day. Extending the time spent on spelling often has a negative effect on the results and on student attitudes. Similarly, students should not have to study words they already know, or do meaningless activities based on the weekly spelling list, as this, too, has negative effects on student achievement and attitude. The spelling period should focus on each student's specific needs.

SPELLING DEVELOPMENT

Beginning Spelling

> Knowing the stages of spelling development can help teachers guide children to spelling improvement, consciousness, and competency.
>
> Gentry, 1981

Research identifies writing stages which parallel stages of language development (Beers and Henderson, 1977; Gentry, 1978). Spelling ability develops from simple to complex within each stage, as it does in oral language.

Spelling begins when children first try to produce a written word in order to relate something. Pre-school children often become word- and letter-conscious as they notice words on signs, labels on cans, words in story books, and headlines in papers. Many words are learned at home, from street signs, from advertising boards, and from the community environment. An interest in words is an important prerequisite of spelling.

Initial readiness for spelling is embedded in oral language. Through a child's observation of different sounds, and through play with words, rhyming words, jingles, alliterative sentences, tongue twisters, etc., children develop a sense of auditory discrimination, so important in spelling. Children rely heavily on their understanding of sounds when they begin to write (Read, 1971, 1973). (For more auditory discrimination activities see the Oral Language Section, and Early Childhood: A Time for Learning, A Time for Joy, p. 148.)

In writing, specific letters represent specific sounds. When children see their favorite letters or words written down, or hear printed words or jingles read with them, they have an opportunity to associate the sounds made by words, with the letters they represent.

Each time teachers write children's dictated stories, they have an opportunity to develop children's spelling skills. Children see letters being formed, letters being arranged to make words, and letters being arranged in different order to make different words. They see the spaces between letters and words. Children can learn to recognize the relationship between spoken and written words.

Children should begin writing by experimenting and becoming active learners (Chomsky, 1971; Clay, 1975). Language arts programs should assist children in becoming aware of the irregularity of written English. This aids the transition from the spoken to the written word.

Cognitive Development of Spelling

A study conducted by Beers and Beers (1980) reported that many six-year-olds function within the preoperational stage. Preoperational thought can be characterized by the inability to decenter; i.e., to release perception from the one dominant feature of a problem in order to consider other features. The first grade children in this study did not consider that one letter may represent many sounds, or that one sound may be represented by many letters. Instead, most first graders focused on the name of the letter as the dominant feature and ignored other features.

However, second graders were aware of the multidimensional characteristics of letters. These children recognized that combinations are often used to represent one sound. According to Beers and Beers, this recognition may have been a result of more instruction, a larger sight vocabulary, or a growing understanding of written words. The transition from the preoperational to the concrete stage of cognitive development may also have influenced the children.

The conclusions in both the Read (1971) and the Beers and Henderson (1980) studies also suggest that changes in children's spelling strategies occur sequentially and systematically, not haphazardly. As children progress through Piaget's stages of cognitive development, they become aware of additional characteristics of written words. In order to use this information, children must be at a concrete level of cognitive development.

For children to consistently spell correctly, they must have the opportunity to examine many words over a considerable period of time. Abstract thinking may be required for children to be able to transform their own spelling into correctly spelled words, especially with unfamiliar words.

Children may not have a complete understanding of written language until they reach the formal operation stage, as described by Piaget.

Developmental Stages of Spelling

Early spelling behavior proceeds in certain stages (C. S. Beers, 1980; J. W. Beers, 1980; Beers and Henderson, 1977; Zutell 1979, 1980). The following stages of spelling development have been identified by J. R. Gentry (1981):

1. Babbling Stage

   This initial stage is evident in kindergarten or grade one, depending upon the child's exposure to print. It is sometimes called the "Deviant Stage" because the letters used by the child bear little resemblance to the word he is attempting to spell; e.g., BtBpA for monster. There is no letter-sound correspondence and often the speller cannot "read back" what has been written. It is not uncommon for numerals to be included in spelling attempts.

2. Prephonetic Stage

   In this stage the child uses one-, two-, or three-letter spellings that demonstrate letter-sound correspondence; e.g., MSR for monster, UR for your. The child is able to represent correctly some of the letter-sound correspondences, but also omits some. At this stage the child is becoming aware of alphabetic principles and begins to link letter to sound.

3. Phonetic Stage

   This stage is characterized by an almost perfect match between letters and sounds. All salient sound features in the word are represented phonetically. The child's phonetic writing doesn't resemble standard spelling but is readable; e.g., MOSTR for monster, HR for her, DRAS for dress. Encouragement at this stage often leads to prolific writing, whereas insistence upon correct spelling will inhibit the child from exploration.

4. Transitional Stage

During this stage the child's spelling representations become more abstract. Words begin to look like English. Vowels appear in every syllable; e.g., phonetic EGL becomes EGUL. Common letter patterns (oo, ck, ee, igh) begin to appear; e.g., YOUNITED for united. For the first time, inflectional endings are spelled uniformly; e.g., ED ending instead of T, D, and ID. Although many words are misspelled during this stage, many are also correct in the child's independent writing.

5. Correct Stage

It is at this stage that a child is ready for formal spelling instruction. Formal spelling should augment and not replace the child's purposeful writing activities. Sufficient writing time should be provided, allowing the child to hypothesize and generate correct spelling.

Formal spelling instructions may be delayed for older children who have not completed the transitional stage of spelling development. If introduced too soon, formal instruction will lead to frustration and little success.

THE SPELLING PROCESS

According to Nicholson and Schacter (1979), proficient spellers seem to be able to use three kinds of knowledge when writing words, which are sometimes used separately and sometimes together.

1. Language Knowledge

Children come to school with a well-developed language competence that enables them to understand words. Carol Chomsky (1971) argues that children can make use of language knowledge in spelling structurally related words, especially those with Latinate forms. For example, knowledge of the word "signal" can be a useful linguistic tool in recalling the spelling for sign.

2. Internalized Rules

Internalized rules enable children to predict and write the most probable spelling for words. They may not be able to articulate these rules but can use them effectively. For example, when asked to spell a word that sounds like "keep" but ends with g instead of p, most of us would probably write keeg or keag. Very few would write kege, ceeg, kieg, or keg.

3. Visual Associations

The third kind of spelling knowledge is a "visual dictionary" in our heads, of words and their graphic forms. Many of these words have unpredictable spelling and are usually learned as unique structures or as word families such as light, sight, right. Storing these visual associations can help children develop automaticity in spelling.

A proficient speller is one who can use all three kinds of knowledge. If students rely too heavily on visual association, they will never be able to remember enough words. If they never use language or rule knowledge, they will not be able to transfer what they already know to new words, even though the words have predictable spellings. However, if they rely too heavily on rules, they may overgeneralize. Teaching activities, therefore, need to incorporate all three kinds of knowledge.

Teaching Implications

1. Teachers should be aware of the student's level of cognitive development.

2. Teachers should provide time for informal learning opportunities so that students can generate and test spelling patterns.

3. Teachers should provide opportunities for children to be exposed to a wide variety of print, and to write in many ways.

4. Teachers should introduce formal instruction only when a student is well into the transitional stage of spelling development. The spelling program should focus on individual needs and augment the writing program.

SPELLING INSTRUCTION

Approaches

Spelling instruction should be based on current research, to ensure proper techniques are being used. Often, commercial materials are not based on research findings. A teacher should select methods and materials discriminately.

1. Incidental Approach:

   Children learn to spell many words without any formal spelling instruction. Through observation and/or testing, teachers discover which words children have learned to spell independently.

2. Direct Teaching Approach:

   A systematic program of instruction given during a spelling period should supplement incidental learning. The spelling period is essential for determining which words have already been learned and which words require additional study.

3. Integrated Approach:

   Spelling skills are developed through all language arts activities (oral language, literature, reading and writing). Teachers should make use of opportunities to teach spelling throughout the day.

Most spelling programs will use a combination of elements from each of the approaches described above. The choice of the elements will be based on student needs.

(For further information on implementing these approaches see Teaching Spelling by Ves Thomas, 1979.)

PLANNING A SPELLING PROGRAM WITHOUT A TEXT

The following suggestions are most appropriate for grades three and four.

1. A major part of the spelling program should be planned as a component of the writing program and taught in conjunction with proofreading skills. It should focus on misspelling in writing and on words students need to know in order to write well.

2. A basic security word list should also serve as a common core of the program. While it is impossible to teach all words children need, it is possible to teach the most frequently used words. Graded word lists, such as those researched by Canfield and Hannon (1964), Rinsland (1945), and Thomas (1979) are recommended. Place students in these lists at a level where they already know 50% to 75% of the words to be learned. Learning to recognize and spell these words develops immediate fluency in reading, writing, and spelling.

3. Another program component should be individual study lists and/or supplementary word lists. The formal spelling period should ensure the basic words are mastered, but those students who have few errors should work on supplementary lists. However, all students should be given time to work on the lists of words misspelled in compositions and of key words selected from daily written work. Personal spelling books can be made with words taken from several sources. These words can be arranged alphabetically or else recorded by each student on individual cards. Generally, these lists would include:

    a) words from basic spelling lists that require further independent study;
    b) words frequently misspelled in written composition;
    c) words encountered in reading, talking and listening, which are intended for use in personal writing;
    d) key words mispronounced. (Careful pronunciation is an important factor in learning to spell a word.)

4. Generalizations and/or rules should be included in a program but they should be limited to those that apply to a large number of words and have few exceptions. Introduce them by the inductive approach. Horn's (1960) rules are suggested.

5. Teach a good word study technique. Present words in lists. Study each new word in isolation. Concentrate on visual form.

6. Use pretest-study-test procedures. Those students who have few or no errors on the pretest will have time to work on supplementary words, or to do related work in semantics and word origins. Pretests and tests should be followed by immediate correction. A student should correct her own work and analyze errors.

7. Follow word study with activities where students use words in the context of phrases and sentences. Integrate spelling with:

    - writing activities
    - dictionary studies
    - verse writing using words studied
    - proofreading
    - listening (note-taking) and dictation (sentences, paragraphs)

8. Use the same words in many different forms.

9. Use games. They are good motivators and help to maintain knowledge of words taught previously.

10. Individualize to meet student needs. The individual study lists and supplementary word lists, obtained from misspelling found in daily work and compositions, will contain the major part of the individualized portion of the program. The remainder should result from on-going diagnosis and should involve grouping: whole class, small group, group of one. Groups should be formed on the basis of a common need and disbanded when the task is completed. Grouping suggestions are as follows:

    a) Total Class Group

        - no prior instruction in a skill
        - motivation
        - listening for information or pleasure, enunciation, pronunciation, etc.
        - class discussion
        - presentation of word lists
        - teaching methods of learning words
        - teaching and reviewing basic rules
        - situations in which every learner can benefit from total class instruction

    b) Small Group

        - maintaining skills
        - re-teaching
        - getting a group started on a task
        - situations where only a few need instruction in a particular skill (basis of need)

    c) Group of One

        - the problem of the learner is not shared by anyone else in class

- working on listening for pronunciation of words
- working on pronunciation

Some spelling activities, applicable to the early primary years, are suggested below:

- Pupil dictated labels, news items, stories, etc., provide excellent opportunities for teachers to teach the rudiments of spelling. Sounding out words, guessing at their spelling, and looking at the sequence of letters, develops awareness of graphophonic relationships and of graphic images of their words. Learning to spell favorite words from their dictated stories, and copying the words on cards for personal files, can be an effective way of helping children spell words and of developing an alphabetical word file to refer to for later spelling.

- Pupils could develop individual picture and word dictionaries. The words are compiled as children request them for their writing activities. The children should be encouraged to look up words they need to use again in their own and other children's dictionaries.

ERROR ANALYSIS THROUGH DIAGNOSIS

> As a general practice in most schools, spelling words are marked either right or wrong with little or no regard for the type of errors made by pupils. Yet, there is evidence to suggest that an analysis of spelling errors can provide the teacher and the student with valuable diagnostic information.
>
> V. Thomas, 1979

Analysis of Errors

Errors in tests and in students' work (in all subject areas), can be analyzed to diagnose the nature of the error. Common types of error:

(a) omission: wen for when
(b) incorrect meaning association: no for know, except for accept
(c) carelessness: surily for surely
(d) repeating or adding a letter: theet for teeth
(e) reversal: becaues for because
(f) phonetic spelling: Wensday for Wednesday
(g) failure to hear words correctly: somer for summer
(h) failure to note silent letters: acke for ache
(i) unfamiliarity with common word endings: askt for asked
(j) faulty observation: acurate for accurate
(k) faulty pronunciation: docter for doctor

After an analysis has been made, words are categorized and groups formed to teach the specific skill according to the students' needs.

Suggestions for Corrective Procedures for Spelling Errors

Causes	Typical Errors	Corrective Procedures
Incorrect visual image	docter for doctor nitting for knitting familar for familiar ligting for lighting	1. Make pupils conscious of the need to see each letter in the word. 2. Break the words into syllables. Have pupils visualize the words. 3. Look at word for strong visual image.
Inaccurate pronunciation and inaccurate auditory memory	pospone for postpone orl for oil chimley for chimney choclet for chocolate	1. Pronounce each word accurately on initial presentation. 2. Pronounce words in concert with class. Listen for inaccurate pronunciations. Check individual pupils for doubtful enunciation. 3. Repeat several times the part of the word which is difficult to enunciate.
Insertion and omission of silent letters	lite for light lineing for lining no for know ofen for often tabl for table gost for ghost stedy for steady lisen for listen	1. Silent letters cause many difficulties in spelling. Since these letters do not create an auditory impression, special stress must be placed on the visual image. 2. Observe each part of the word and have pupils practice writing the part likely to cause trouble. 3. Provide practice exercises to fix habits of dealing with silent letters.
Confusion of consonant sounds	acke for ache parck for park gudge for judge visinity for vicinity sertain for certain	1. Practice for correct image of the word. 2. Children neet to know that some letters have more than one sound. S may sound like s or z C may sound like s or k G may sound like g or j
Confusion of vowel sounds	holaday for holiday turm for term oder for odor salery for salary rejoyce for rejoice	1. Have pupils break work into syllables, and look at its parts. 2. Practice for correct visual image of the word. 3. Practice writing the word for the kinesthetic feel of the letters.

Confusion of double vowels	reel for real quear for queer	1. Double vowels often take the sound of the single letters of another vowel combination.
Inaccurate formation of derivatives	stoped for stopped haveing for having flys for flies sincerly for sincerely omited for omitted	1. Work for more vivid visual image of word endings. 2. Emphasize auditory image of endings. 3. Break words into syllables. Have children observe the word in its parts. 4. Call attention to generalizations pertinent to regular ways of adding endings. 5. Stress better understanding of adding suffixes. Provide practice exercises on word endings.
Reversals or transposition of letters	gose for goes form for from bread for beard	1. Pronounce word distinctly. Have pupils listen for sequence of each sound in word. 2. Practice for correct visual image.
Incorrect meaning - homonyms	dew for due our for hour hole for whole	1. Illustrate use of the word with most common meaning. 2. Use pairs of words in sentence to distinguish what each means. 3. Provide practices on homonyms and stress word meanings at all times.
Phonetic spelling applied to non-phonetic words	bin for been gon for gone sum for some	1. While spelling includes phonetics, the pupil must be taught to look for numerous exceptions in our unphonetic language. He cannot rely on sound alone. He must realize that his visual memory must be his guide in many words and word parts.
Confusion of words that are similar in sound	an for and were for where merry for marry effect for affect cents for sense further for farther	1. This error is often due to faulty auditory acuity. Care should be given to enunciation of these words. 2. Pronounce the words in pairs and give the meaning of each.

Lack of acquaintance with phonetic elements	ivlize for result haw for how inbean for imagine	1. For pupils very deficient in phonetic sense or training, begin work with simple visual-auditory training (attaching beginning consonant sounds to appropriate letter symbol). 2. Use kinesthetic approach also. 3. Provide phonics readiness training.
Poor handwriting	stors for stars temt for tent	1. Provide practice on letter forms which cause special difficulty. 2. Emphasize accurate formation of each letter. 3. Guide pupils in size, shape, slant, and spacing between letters and words.
Overemphasis on rules	Rules not helpful in learning to spell in lower grades, and of limited value in upper grades	1. Children should not be required to learn rules for their application as a means of learning to spell. Reference to certain rules in upper grades may prove helpful, but pupils need to know that numerous exceptions make rules an unsafe guide.
Nervousness	Inaccuracies due to lack of control for deliberate thinking.	1. Check child's health. Be sure vision and hearing are not defective. 2. Remove all possible tensions.
Carelessness	Errors due to poor concentration and careless habits of word study.	1. Stimulate pride in work well done. 2. Praise all improvement.

Developed by Sister Rita Petit, M.O., Ed. D., Special Coordinator, Evergreen School Division No. 22. Used with permission.

SPELLING ACTIVITIES

Some spelling activities applicable to the early primary years are:

- pupils dictate labels, news items, stories;
- pupils sound out words, guess at their spelling, look for sequences of letters, develop awareness of grapho-phonic relationships and of graphic images of words;
- pupils learn to spell favorite words from dictated stories;
- words can be copied on cards for personal files;

- individual picture and/or word dictionaries can be developed;
- children should be encouraged to look up words in their own or other dictionaries;
- teachers can make wall lists of words related to themes, content subject areas or skills (e.g., using possessives);
- word lists of problem words can be displayed.

Games

The use of games in the spelling program helps children maintain interest as they learn, practice and review words. Games may help children focus precisely on letters and letter order in an entertaining way. Well-selected activities can revitalize spelling programs in most classrooms.

1. Riddle games based on semantic clues.

2. A good game for segmenting and sequencing letters into words calls for amassing many letters into a block and trying to find as many words as possible. Most kindergarten, grades one and two children should be required to find words spelled from left-to-right only.

a	c	t	o	m	o	m
b	f	u	n	g	t	v
n	g	h	s	e	e	b
k	i	t	t	e	n	o
m	i	s	r	e	d	x
l	q	b	o	t	z	t
l	o	o	k	i	n	g

3. Crossword puzzles - A game for spelling precision that works on the tendency to reverse and confuse letters. It requires children to print in the letters of the words.

4. Junior Scrabble - Commercial

5. Spello - Commercial

6. Letter Jumble - Let children select letters from a specific group to make up specific words.

   Use all nine letters and try
   to spell three three-letter
   animals.

   G O
   O D
   G C
   W I P

   ---

7. Concentration - a game. Have children play the game as usual, but once the paired words are identified, require that they be spelled correctly in order to remain uncovered.

8. Word chain - Each student spells a word that begins with the last letter of the word spelled just before his turn. Words can be used from personal spelling lists or be interest words children have used in their writing.

9. Slot machine - Students make spelling folders with a small rectangle removed (tachistoscopes). The slot is for viewing a word after it has been corrected in his writing.

10. Crossword Building - Provide a grid. Have children arrange words from their word files by noting spelling patterns and recurring letters. Definitions can be used for clues.

11. Anagrams - Have student try to transpose the letters to spell a different word; e.g., ate/eat; tame/mate/team.

12. Homonym charts - Fill up the whole hole. Use "start a chart" technique. Post one and tie a pencil nearby, watch it grow.

13. Charades - The pupils may enjoy acting out the meaning of antonyms. As the words are guessed by other members of the group, they are written on the chalkboard.

(For more spelling games, see Thomas, 1979.)

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HANDWRITING

INTRODUCTION

Handwriting is a tool of communication.

At the primary school level, the language arts program is concerned with helping children develop ability in writing clear manuscript and cursive forms easily. The program is also concerned with helping children recognize the importance of handwriting as a means of expressing their ideas, and with fostering pride in their ability to write well.

Handwriting is a developmental process. Therefore, teachers should understand that:

- the child is the focus for making decisions about the most effective methods of teaching handwriting;
- handwriting is a complex sensory-motor skill involving interrelationships of motor coordination, letter formation, words, symbols, and ideas in effective language patterns.

Parents' and teachers' perceptions of handwriting appear to have changed little in the last decade. Sloan and Triplett (1977) compared their study to Renaud and Groff's (1966), and found about the same percentage of respondents indicating that handwriting was as important now as in the past. An overwhelming majority thought both manuscript and cursive writing should be taught in school. The more recent study also reiterated that handwriting influences self-image, that special consideration must be given to those students having difficulty establishing hand preferences and that better home-school communication concerning handwriting is needed.

Integration Within Language Arts

> Handwriting is for writing. It does not exist to make rows of circles, establish habits of cleanliness, copy epigrammatic statements from the chalkboard, or involve the students in independent activity during reading period. It is not an end in itself.
>
> Donald H. Graves, (1978)

The relationship of handwriting to spelling is through the larger context of the language arts. Mispronunciation and poor handwriting may lead to spelling errors, and copying words may lead to learning some spellings. However, the link between handwriting and spelling has not been directly established (Petty, 1966). Bader (1970) compared the effects of manuscript-cursive combinations on spelling achievement and found no differences in mean spelling gains.

How handwriting and composing are related is also not entirely clear (Graves, 1978). There is research investigating the influence of handwriting quality on teachers' evaluation of written compositions. Huck and Bounds (1972) found that neat writers were biased towards neatly written essays. Depillo (1970) found no differences in creativity due to handwritting. A number of intervening variables account for the relationship between handwriting and composing, and no causative relationship is implied. Obviously, the content and the format may be separated.

GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF HANDWRITING

The purpose of all writing is to express meaning, to communicate, and to record information legibly.

The general objectives for handwriting in the English language arts curriculum are to enable students:

1. To recognize the importance of handwriting.

    - others judge us by form as well as content
    - most school work requires handwriting
    - much personal correspondence is through the medium of handwriting
    - historically, alphabetic writing was used to record much of our early history

2. To develop a legible form of handwriting.

    - it is a perceptual-motor act (not simply one or the other)
    - individuality should be respected; although for teaching purposes, one model may be useful
    - different purposes (labelling, story writing, note-taking, taking a telephone message, writing a letter) may dictate the quality of the handwriting
    - in cases of extreme perceptual-motor problems, typewriting and alternate grips may be considered
    - both manuscript and cursive writing forms are useful when appropriately used

3. To develop the ability to write legibly at a reasonable rate.

4. To acquire knowledge of basic forms of manuscript handwriting.

    - where to begin upper case letters and how to form them
    - the forms of lower case letters
    - the sizes and spacing of letters and numerals
    - comfortable grip and hand movement that achieves legibility and efficiency

5. To acquire knowledge of basic forms of cursive handwriting.

    - where to begin capital letters and how to form them (some variant forms provided)
    - the forms of small letters
    - various connecting strokes

- the sizes and spacing of letters and numerals
- comfortable grip and hand movement that achieves legibility and efficiency

6. To develop self-assessment techniques.

   - research supports the importance of self-evaluation in improving legibility
   - most students and/or classes can develop their own basic criteria: slant, spacing, size, alignment, letter quality, the joining of letters and line quality
   - individual goal-setting is enhanced when students are conversant with the criteria of handwriting

READINESS

Because children achieve readiness for manuscript handwriting at very different times--usually depending on the level of maturity and the development of fine motor coordination--teachers need to watch for signs of interest and dexterity, encouraging and helping those children who want to write.

Prior to formal instruction, children should participate in activities which will develop fine muscle coordination. Scribbling, painting, drawing, modelling, constructing, etc., are prewriting activities which develop muscular coordination of fingers, hands, and arms. Through these activities, the child develops and gains control over the tools used in writing. The child also learns the basic strokes for making manuscript letters.

Handedness has usually been established between ages five and seven. Most children in this age group, however, have not fully developed coordination of the smaller muscles of the hands and fingers. Some irregularities in handwriting may be expected, and standards should not be unreasonably high. When children are beginning to write, they should not be confined to lined paper. Frequent use of large areas, such as the chalkboard, permits use of the better coordinated large muscles.

Coordination of smaller muscles improves by the time the child reaches the ages of eight to ten. Writing is reduced in size and it becomes more uniform in quality.

Eye-hand coordination, perceptual abilities, and oral language abilities must also develop. There is little point in trying to teach the child to write before she can express her ideas orally.

Listening to stories, chanting rhymes, dictating stories and letters, writing the daily class news, and composing songs are experiences which lead to a readiness for writing. As children watch the teacher write down their story, poem, letter, or invitation, the chalk becomes a magic wand. Out of this experience grows the desire to take the place of the teacher as the scribe.

Readiness Criteria

The child:

- has spontaneously shown an interest in learning to print his or her own name;
- has developed facility in the use of scissors, crayons, paint brushes, and pencils in a variety of informal activities;
- can copy simple geometric or letter-shaped figures;
- has established handedness;
- has participated in composing and sending written messages;
- senses a personal need to learn to write.

Children who lack readiness for manuscript handwriting need preparatory activities. They need to develop not only physical readiness, but also the understanding that writing is more than a mechanical skill. The readiness criteria listed above provide clues to the types of activities that promote handwriting readiness.

Initial Procedures

Procedures for structuring initial experiences with manuscript writing include:

- grouping letters which are similarly formed and introducing them in extended units;
- putting individual letters into words as soon as children have a sufficient repertoire of letters;
- using writing in meaningful class activities;
- providing models for children to copy;
- preparing children for writing; children should concentrate on how to sit, hold pencils, position papers, etc. (Hennings, 1978).

The use of manuscript should be encouraged whenever the style is more appropriate throughout the school years.

Transition from Manuscript to Cursive

> The transition to cursive writing should not be dictated by the curriculum guide, the course of study, or a specific writing series.
>
> Logan, Logan and Patterson (1972)

Although many language arts textbooks recommend the transition from manuscript to cursive writing be considered late in the second grade or in the third grade, this recommendation is largely a response to tradition rather than educational merit. For example, Otto and Rarick (1969) made a post hoc study of fourth and fifth graders who had made the transition at four different times (first half of grade two; second half of grade two; first half of grade three; second half of grade three), and found differences in their writing ability only when the second and the last transition times were compared. Therefore, it appears there is no fixed time to transfer from manuscript to cursive.

There seem to be few, if any, physiological reasons to hamper writing, whether manuscript or cursive. The current practice of introducing manuscript writing in the first grade is approximately fifty years old. Primers used in Canada in the 1920s often began with cursive writing, then progressed to "print." A study of children's writing in the province of Manitoba found that a sizeable number of twelfth graders wrote their essays in manuscript form (Manitoba Department of Education, 1979).

In conclusion, there are few compelling reasons for or against the practice of beginning with manuscript writing and then changing to cursive writing. It appears that individual readiness, and not a fixed, preordained transition time, should be the deciding factor.

The basic differences between manuscript and cursive forms should be noted.

Manuscript	Cursive
Letters are made separately.	Letters are joined.
Pencils are lifted at the end of each letter or stroke.	Pencils are lifted at the end of each word.
Basic shapes are circles and straight lines.	Basic shapes are upstrokes, ovals, downstrokes and connecting strokes.
There is no retracing.	Retracing is necessary.
Writing is vertical.	Writing is slanted.

TEACHING HANDWRITING

Traditionally, the teaching of handwriting has put great emphasis on copying and practice. Earlier instruction in handwriting was often characterized by undue emphasis on the mechanics of writing. Drills and skills became ends in themselves. Instruction to the whole class, uniformity of style, and the isolation of handwriting were often the pattern.

However, one may make a good case for perception preceding production in the development of handwriting. Perhaps the best known proponent of the perceptual-motor approach is Furner (1969), who recommends verbalization to guide the child in learning the starting points of letters, the direction of strokes, the sizes, and the ending point. The work Gibson and Levin (1975) and Maccoby (1968) supports the concepts of systematic analysis and discrimination.

An ideal method for teaching handwriting would be one which least interferes with self-expression and other learning, and which results in accurate perception, provides for rapid communication, is physiologically realistic, and is amenable to realistic motivation (Froese, 1981).

A state-of-the-art paper (Brown, 1977) to school divisions, suggested each teacher consider himself a conscious teacher of handwriting in all content areas and at all grade levels. This could be accomplished by good models, sufficient practice, and positive feedback.

Time and Scheduling

In order that children develop the handwriting skills needed for their daily writing activities, special, supervised handwriting periods should be provided. Once they know the formation of the letters, they should be able to produce and maintain legible writing at a reasonable speed, as a result of constant and meaningful practice in everyday expressive writing. Teachers should monitor students' daily writing activities to identify any incorrect letter formations and then plan lessons which correct their individual difficulties.

Position and Movement

Guidelines for the development of appropriate handwriting skills:

1. During formal lessons, children should sit comfortably erect at their desks or tables.

2. The forearm not involved in the writing should rest at least partly on the desk with the hand holding the paper and moving it when necessary.

3. As nearly as possible, the writing hand should be held with the palm down and should rest on the third and fourth fingers.

4. For manuscript writing, the placement of the paper could be perpendicular to the front edge of the desk, or have a slant of 10°. Whichever placement is comfortable for the individual child should be the one encouraged by the teacher. For cursive writing, the paper should be slanted to the left.

5. The arm, hand and fingers are involved in the writing movement. The arm moves forward, the hand glides across the surface, and the fingers form the letters.

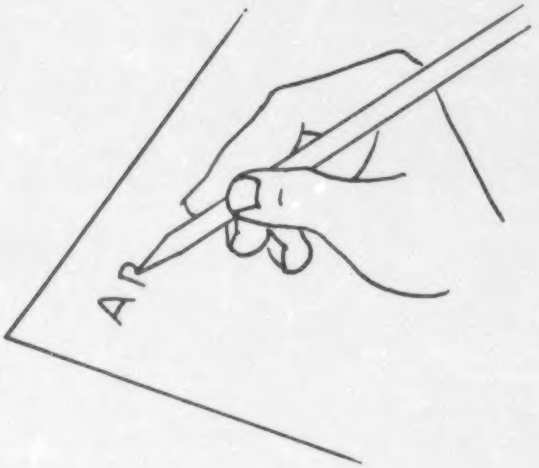
Researchers such as Callerwaert (1963) have found that it is possible to grip the writing instrument another way without impairing speed and legibility. One alternate grip consists of placing the pencil between the middle and index fingers, which grip the pencil along with the thumb. (See Diagram B.) The hand and wrist is canted to the side more than it is in the traditional grip, and produces a more rounded set of letters and a more vertical slant than in the traditional grip.

Since handwriting is an idiosyncratic process, other grips are also possible. The stress should be on legibility.

Recommended paper and pencil positions for right- and left-handed writers are illustrated below.

Right-Handed Grips

A



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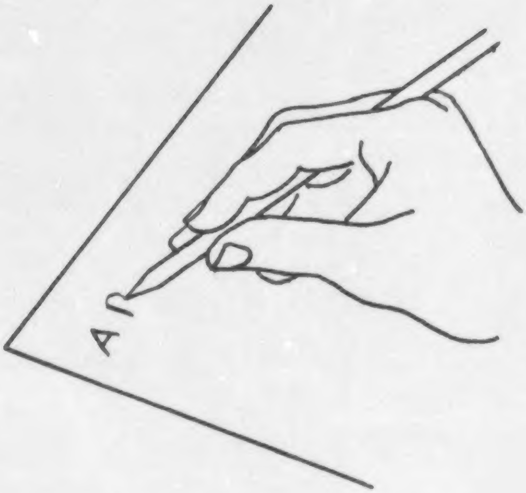
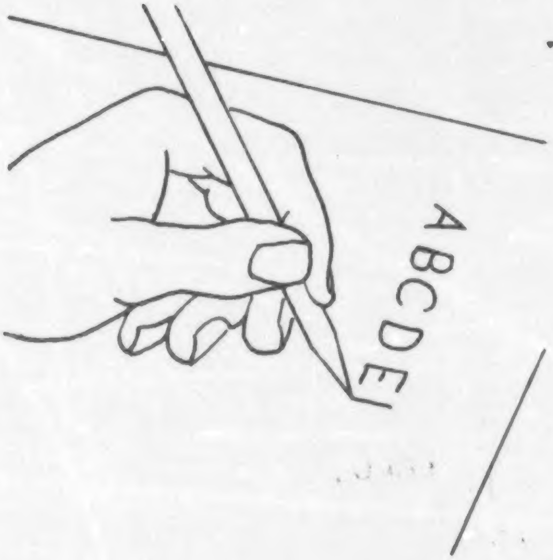


Left-Handed Grips

A



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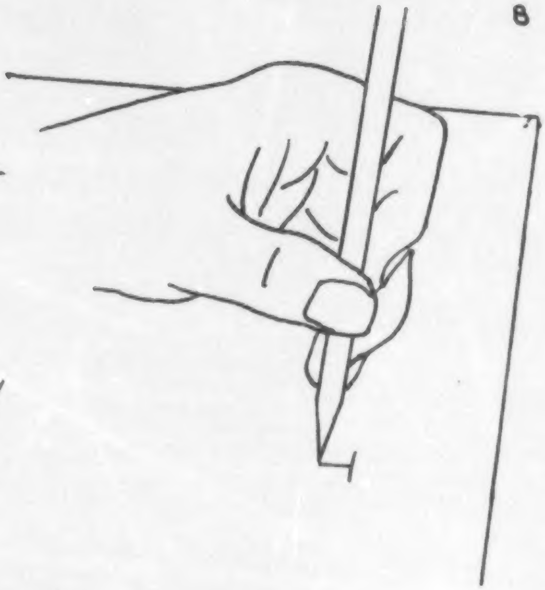
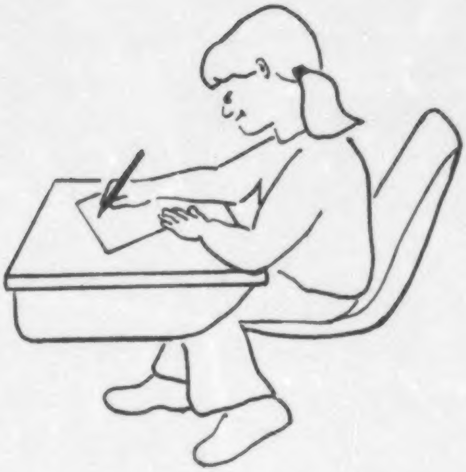
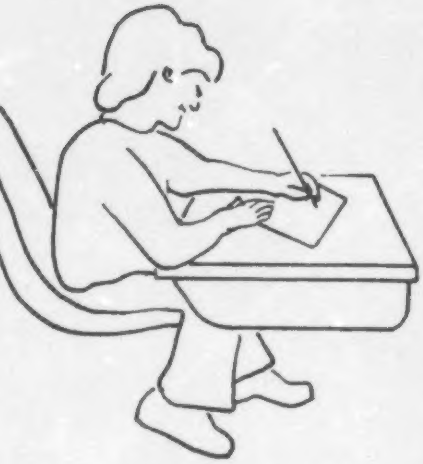
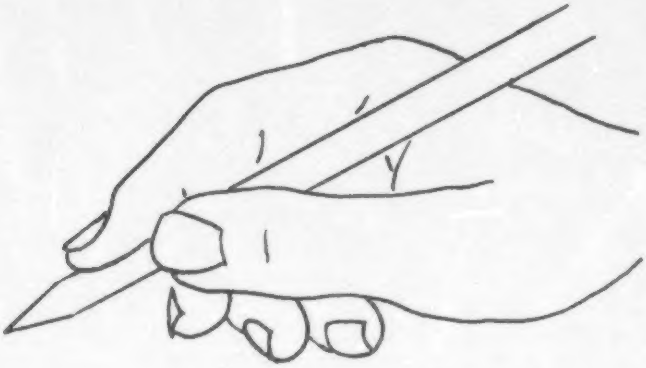
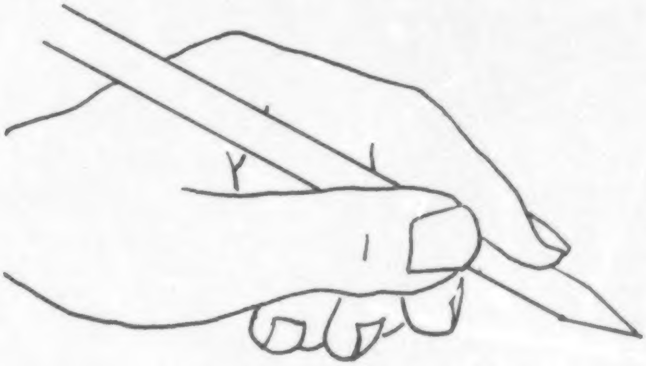










Letter Formation

To capitalize on the perceptual-motor nature of handwriting, it is probably best to group the letters by characteristics such as ascending-descending, curved-straight, orientation, those requiring change in direction, etc.

A. Manuscript

Letters characterized by lines:

i l t
I H L T E F

Letters characterized by vertical and slanting lines:

k v w x y z
A K M N V W X Y Z

Letters characterized by curves and straight lines:

o c a d e p f u
O C G Q U
m n p r
D P B R J
s g

B. Cursive

Markoff (1976) suggests the following subjective groupings for cursive writing:

b h l k e f
a d c p
i t
m n
u w
y z j g q
r s o
A O C
M N W
H K X
F T
Y Z J
I L S G D
B P R
E Q V

Naturally, there are other means of grouping these cursive letters, and the teacher may involve the students in this matter.

THE QUALITY OF HANDWRITING

Handwriting may be variously perceived, which strongly influences whether it is accepted or rejected by others. At least three factors may be identified:

1. the reader's ease of comprehension
2. the writer's concept of adequacy and personalized form of efficient production
3. some external aesthetic standard

If only some of these dimensions are considered, then an inappropriate judgement is likely.

Patterns of Growth

Burrows, Monson and Stauffer (1972) have identified characteristic developmental trends in five aspects of handwriting quality:

1. Size of writing decreases gradually and stabilizes at individual, near-adult proportions.
2. Alignment improves from a crude approximation of line arrangement to reasonably "straight" writing on lined paper.
3. Irregularities in pressure, tension, and size diminish as coordination improves.
4. Letter formation takes on further individual characteristics, but within the bounds of legibility.
5. Speed increases to a near-adult rate and rhythm.

Personal Variations

Handwriting is an idiosyncratic process. To the trained observer, a handwriting sample may communicate information about the writer's status, self-concept, artistry or spatial awareness (Solomon, 1978).

The purpose for writing should be taken into consideration (i.e., taking notes, writing a final draft to be handed in, a graphic display, etc.).

When variations in handwriting are considered, at least three guiding principles should be considered:

(1) the developmental level of the child
(2) uniformity rather than conformity
(3) the purpose for writing

Standards of Legibility

Standards of legibility are closely related to the purpose of writing. The following criteria should apply to the edited products that are to be shared (stories, letters, messages), or kept as a record (notebooks). Care should be taken to ensure that emphasis on legibility does not interfere with the children's private writing or the first drafts of their creative writing.

In assessing legibility, teachers should consider the following elements which apply to both manuscript and cursive writing:

- form
- size
- spacing
- alignment
- slant
- line quality

Using the above criteria, teachers can help children to prepare charts or checklists which will assist them in the analysis of their handwriting. Following initial experiences with checklists, children may wish to develop standards which they can chart and use.

EVALUATION

Much of the evaluation of handwriting in schools is based on a comparison to standards proposed by commercial writing systems. Often these standards are arbitrary, not based on sound research, and unrelated to legibility. A stronger case can be made for uniformity in slant, size, and form (Foerster, 1974), rather than for one absolute standard for every child.

In evaluating growth in handwriting, the following principles should be ocnsidered:

1. Evaluation should be based on objectives listed at the beginning of this chapter.
2. Evaluation should be continuous and interrelated.
3. Evaluation should involve both the child and the teacher.
4. Evaluation should involve self-appraisal of progress, based on objectives which are clearly understood by the child.

It is suggested that evaluation of handwriting be a joint effort between teacher and student.

The improvement of handwriting depends to a great extent upon children's motivation to write well. It is important, therefore, that children become involved in analyzing their handwriting performance. They need to know the objectives and criteria upon which they will judge their handwriting. The teacher helps the child understand these criteria and objectives, and the child then becomes aware of the need for good handwriting, and alert to finding and correcting his errors.

The secret of steady improvement in handwriting lies in continuous evaluation. The following activities are ways in which evaluation may be accomplished:

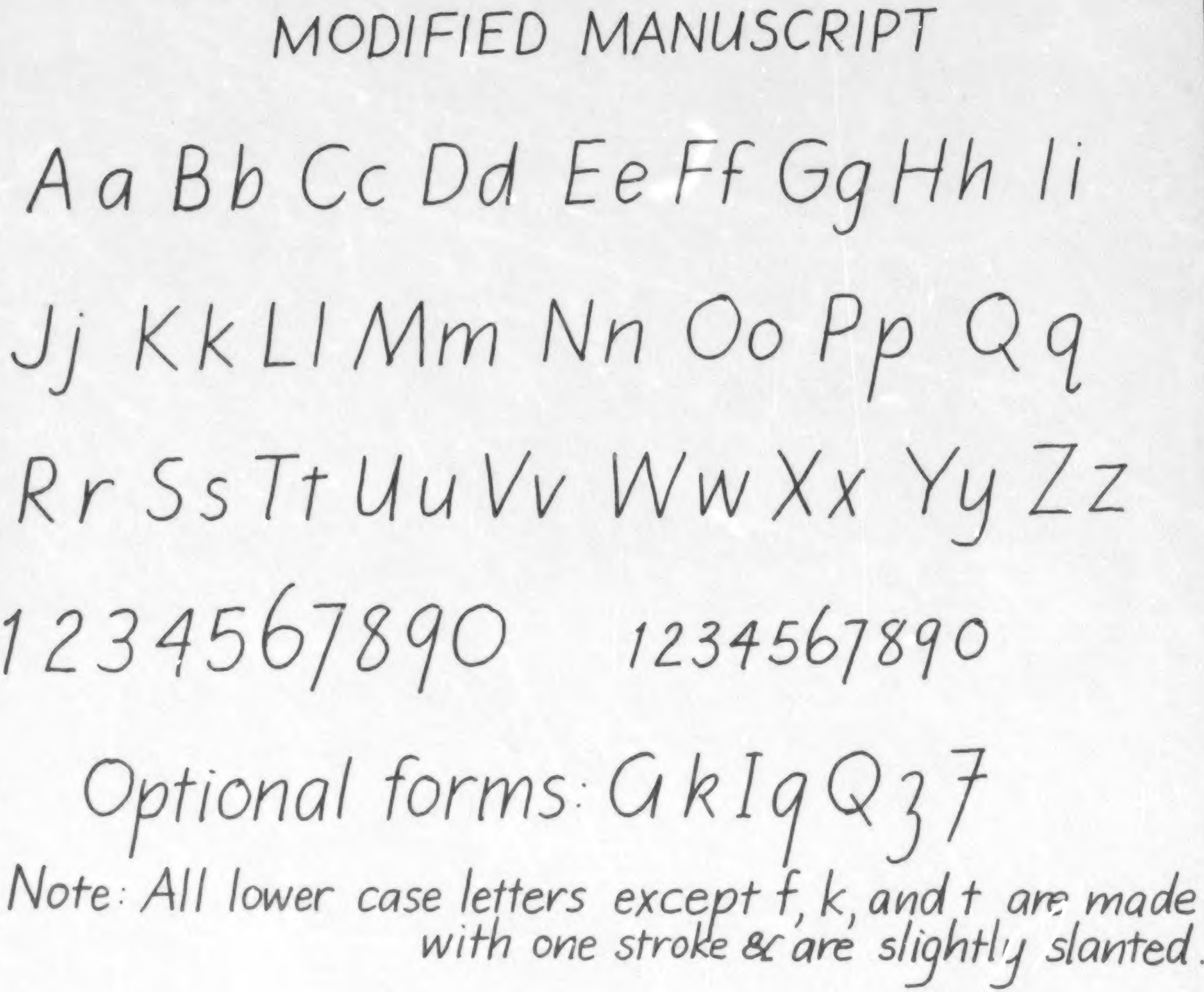
1. The child keeps a folder of dated samples of his work throughout the year, which helps him see his progress.

2. The child participates in a group or class discussion of good writing.
3. The child participates in the development of an evaluation checklist or progress chart.
4. The child selects examples from her folders, that she can evaluate against the checklist or the class standard.

The following checklist may help teachers appraise their own teaching of handwriting:

	Yes	No
1. Do I use the best means available to motivate my pupils?		
2. Do I always set a good example in my own handwriting?		
3. Do I help pupils assess their own handwriting?		
4. Do I base my lessons on diagnosed needs?		
5. Do I individualize some of my writing instruction-practice?		
6. Do I facilitate legible handwriting by the assignments I give?		

Note: Sample alphabets are included on the following pages. Schools should feel free to develop their own forms which should be maintained throughout the grades. There is no correct way to form letters. The achievement of legibility with ease of production is the aim in handwriting instruction.



MODIFIED MANUSCRIPT

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq

Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890 1234567890

Optional forms: ɑ k I q Q 3 7

Note: All lower case letters except f, k, and t are made with one stroke & are slightly slanted.

MODIFIED CURSIVE

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii

Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr

Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz

1234567890 1234567890

Optional forms: F G I J L M N

Note: Loops are omitted and lower case letters
are half the size of capital letters.

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INTEGRATION

The word "integration" is used extensively in language arts. It can apply to many different relationships in school programming. Integration may refer to:

- relating home experiences to school experiences
- allowing for interaction between students of various aptitudes, interests, and cultures
- relating concepts and contents of different subject areas to each other
- relating and extending specific language skills to other areas of language development
- relating the concepts of expressive communication to the other arts and media

Integration is a teaching strategy that extends learning activities, incorporates known concepts, and often makes learning more meaningful. It is a strategy that relies on the teacher's ability to recognize opportunities for relating learning activities, and to incorporate these relationships into programs in a meaningful way. Integration should not be fabricated or forced. It can be facilitated through maintaining natural relationships between different language activities, different subjects, different forms, different media and different arts. Students should be encouraged to make appropriate connections for themselves.

Strategies

The child should have language experiences in which listening, speaking, reading, writing, literary and thinking skills are part of a larger process. Activities can be integrated into:

- common concepts (e.g., rhythm in language, and rhythm in music and movement)
- common topics (e.g., literature about different cultures, and study of different countries)
- common objectives (e.g., recalling details in reading, and problem solving)

Activities involving integration:

- talking and writing about thoughts that have been read or heard
- reading to find out, to enjoy and to share
- discussing before writing
- sharing original work through dramatization, telling, or showing
- working together on composing
- extending original literature through art, music, drama, slide-making, etc.

Note: In all these activities, the students will be involved in thinking, the integrating component of ideas one receives and produces.

Throughout each section of the early years guide, integrated activities are described. The following is an example of how language/thinking activities can be organized around a focal point and how these same skills are developed throughout the child's school day.

LANGUAGE GROWTH THROUGHOUT THE CHILD'S DAY

(These same language and thinking skills are developed throughout the many activities outlined in guides related to other subject areas. The page numbers in brackets refer to the corresponding curriculum guides.)

Physical Education

K	Play: Animal Trap, Animal Tag, Beep the Road Runner (p. 86) (provides experience and vocabulary related to theme).
Grade 1	Respond to a stimulating story through movement (p. 114) (visualizing auditory information; interpreting).
Grade 2	Move at high, low, medium levels (p. 131) (categorizing movements according to a given vocabulary).
Grade 3	Duplicate exact movement of a partner (matching p. 150) (using visual clues; could be extended to verbal description).
Grade 4	Take part in circuit training stations that condition specific parts of the body (p. 164) (developing ideas of movement in terms of body parts - useful in comparing/contrasting different animals).

FOCUS

Theme: Animals
Skills:
Receiving - visualize oral/written language
Processing - classify, compare
Expressing - describe in detail

Music

K	Create actions or movements to a song to show its different sections (p. 29) (recognize/visualize parts through auditory information).
Grade 1	Picture/write the steady beat in stick or line notation (p. 15) (describing auditory information through visual symbols).
Grade 2	Recognize a chord change using Animal Fair (p. 42) (extending vocabulary related to theme).
Grade 3	Write a short poem and create a melody with a given set of notes (p. 53) (extending concepts of rhythm of language).
Grade 4	Experience even, uneven and syncopated rhythms through echo clapping, reading rhythmic notations, reading from song books (p. 64) (recognizing different symbols and expressing the difference through verbal and non-verbal activities).

Math

K	Classify a given set of objects according to shape. (p. 44) (comparing, contrasting).
Grade 1	Finding the difference by comparing two sets (p. 60) (comparing and describing through verbal and number stories).
Grade 2	Investigate symmetry in the environment; e.g., butterfly, bird (expanding vocabulary).
Grade 3	Illustrate multiplication and division problems by making arrays (p. 104) (describing/illustrating information visually).
Grade 4	Organize information using tallying system (p. 174) (categorizing oral or written information).

Science

K	Observe animals and describe their differences and similarities (p. 67) (comparing, describing).
Grade 1	Observe and compare the change of growth that occurs in animals (p. 90) (visualizing, comparing, describing).
Grade 2	Identify properties which are unique to mammals, birds, reptiles, fish, insects, amphibians (p. 100) (categorizing, comparing, describing).
Grade 3	Define and discuss habitat related to characteristics of the animals (p. 118) (extending vocabulary, cause and effect).
Grade 4	Infer ways in which various animals care for their young (p. 143) (visualizing, making inferences, describing).

INTEGRATED LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES

Listening

K — Listen to descriptions of familiar animals for purposes of identification.
e.g., It has long ears and a fluffy tail. It is a ______________.

Grade 1 — Listen to comparative descriptions of animals for purposes of identification.
e.g., It looks like a cat, but it is as big as a motorcycle. It is a l________________________.

Grade 2 — Listen for descriptive words that are similar in meaning (synonyms).
e.g., I saw an enormous elephant with a huge trunk.

Grade 3 — Listen to the description of the parts of an animal to determine how it will move.
e.g., Some squirrels are special. They have small bodies, strong legs, and thin pieces of skin joining each front and back leg. They can cl__________, j__________ and s _ _ r.

Grade 4 — Listen to the description of an imaginary animal for purposes of drawing an impression of it.
e.g., It has the head of a lion, the body of a snake, sixteen legs, and an eye that can look in all directions.

FOCUS

Theme: Animals
Skills:
Receiving - visualize oral/ written language
Processing - classify, compare
Expressing - describe in detail

Reading

K — Read frame stories.
e.g., It is small.
It is a mouse.
It is big.
It is an elephant.

Grade 1 — Read comparison poems composed by the class.
e.g., It's a lion, lion
That I like
It looks like a car
The size of a motorbike.

Grade 2 — Read a friend's story, looking for opportunities to use synonyms.
e.g., Using a thesaurus, try to change the descriptive words in the story without changing meaning.

Grade 3 — Read the story of "The Hare and the Tortoise" for purposes of discussing and writing.
e.g., Compare the physical attributes of the animals and how they move. Who should have won the race? Why?

Grade 4 — Read about your favorite animals in an encyclopedia for purposes of drawing.
e.g., Draw and label this animal.

Speaking

K	Describe pictures of animals for the purpose of giving clues. e.g., I spy with my little eye, an animal with a long, long neck and brown spots.
Grade 1	Make up chants using comparatives. e.g., A Saint Bernard is big. A zebra is bigger. But, an elephant is the biggest.
Grade 2	Repeat phrases, changing designated words, trying to maintain meaning. e.g., A big, brown cow - A large, chocolate colored cow.
Grade 3	Complete sentences telling what animals can do and why. e.g., A giraffe can ____________ because he has a _____________ .
Grade 4	Use role play; have an "alien" and an "earthling" share descriptions of their pets. e.g., Have audiences draw pictures of these pets and prepare for writing stories about them.

Writing

K	Finish frames with a copied frame or picture. e.g., It is small. It is a ________________.
Grade 1	Write comparative sentences. e.g., A mouse can run fast. A rabbit can run faster. But a cheetah can run the fastest.
Grade 2	Make a "mini-thesaurus" (group or individual work). e.g., big: large, huge, gigantic, enormous.
Grade 3	Write "I Wish" stories, using parts of animals. e.g., I wish I lived in a hard shell like a turtle because . . .
Grade 4	Write an advertisement selling a "Most Unusual Pet".